



THE
BOOK OF PSALMS.

A NEW TRANSLATION,

WITH

NOTES, EXPLANATORY AND CRITICAL.

BY

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"Librum hunc non abs re vocare soleo ἀνατομὴν omnium animæ partium : quando nullum in se affectum quisquam reperiet, cujus in hoc speculo non reluceat imago. Imo omnes hic dolores, tristitias, metus, dubitationes, spes, curas, anxietates, turbulentos denique motus, quibus jactari solent humanæ mentes, Spiritus Sanctus ad vivum representavit."—CALVIN, *Prol. in Psal.*

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P R E F A C E.

So many translations of the Book of Psalms have been presented to the public within the last fifty years, that it becomes indispensable for one who attempts to add to the number, to assign the reasons which have induced him to undertake what may appear to be a needless and superfluous labour.

I may, I hope, without presumption observe, that this book has been an object of my attentive consideration for many years, and that I have sincerely endeavoured to discover the true sense of these sacred and interesting compositions. My first object was to explain them for my own satisfaction, and for the purposes of private improvement. A conviction of the obvious truth, that nothing which is not clearly understood can be conducive to edification, was deeply felt at an early period of my life, when I was in possession but of few and inadequate means for the attainment of clear conceptions respecting this most attractive part of the Old Testament writings. I know not what may be the feelings of other readers of the Psalms, but I am constrained to own, that many parts of them long appeared to me to be extremely obscure, and that my efforts to remove this obscurity, by a frequent perusal of the common version, assisted by such helps as I could command, left me still in great uncertainty, not only in relation to many individual passages, but also respecting

the general principles on which the writers of them proceeded; and especially respecting the application of many of them, which is made by the writers of the New Testament, to the events which are connected with the advent and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The effect of these considerations was to lead me, ten or twelve years ago, to form the purpose of carefully and repeatedly perusing them in the original Hebrew, and endeavouring to remove from them the obscurities of which, it seemed to me, I had reason to complain. The critics and expositors, whose works I at that time consulted, I found to be governed by principles so much at variance with one another, that I despaired of arriving at the satisfaction which I was desirous to attain, by depending on what, notwithstanding the numerous excellencies by which much of it is distinguished, made me apprehensive that I must exert what discernment or knowledge I might possess, united with a dependence on the aid which Divine goodness is ever ready to vouchsafe to those who seek it with humble sincerity, to enable me to accomplish an object so truly desirable. While I was endeavouring to carry my purpose into effect, I was suddenly incapacitated for this, and every other intellectual occupation, by the overwhelming increase of a morbid condition of the nerves, which for many preceding years I had had occasion deeply to lament, but which, by a most unlooked for bereavement in my family, was stimulated into such a degree of mental excitement as issued in utter despair; compelled me to relinquish all my professional engagements; to seclude myself from all converse with my friends; and to give myself up, as a victim, to the displeasure of that infinite Being, the dread of whose anger I was unable either to remove or to tolerate. During five or six years I remained in this state of forlorn and utter destitution, without a ray of hope that I should ever emerge from this "region of the shadow of death." I was, however, mistaken; and God, who is the

comforter of those that are cast down, was pleased to deliver me, and to confer upon me a greater degree both of bodily and mental health than I have ever, since the days of early youth, enjoyed.

During the continuance of the distressing state to which I have adverted, my thoughts often recurred involuntarily to several of the Psalms, which had formerly afforded me great delight, but from which I was now unable to extract any consolation. I was not in a condition to peruse them, and they were remembered only with sentiments of the most pungent melancholy; the blessedness of which they are descriptive appeared to be passed away irretrievably and for ever from me; and the passages which most frequently offered themselves to my thoughts were such as this: "Thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long. I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart." Psalm xxxviii. 2, 6, 8. Distracted, however, and overwhelmed as I was, a powerful sentiment of the surpassing beauty and excellence of many of the Psalms never altogether deserted me; and perhaps the strongest emotion of my desolate heart was excited by a despairing wish, to derive from them even but a transient perception of the exquisite sweetness which, I was still persuaded, was inherent in them; though I was unvisited by a hope that such a wish would ever be gratified.

My pious readers will not be surprised that, when this deep cloud had been in some degree dissipated, I should advert to my former purpose of attempting an elucidation of this book, so endeared to me by the many examples of suffering, somewhat like my own, which are recorded in it: or that I should desire to confer some small portion of aid on those who are desirous of increasing their acquaintance with it. Soon after my unexpected recovery, my study of the Psalms was recommenced; and I am now willing to indulge a hope, that my

inquiries and studies have not been altogether in vain. Such was the origin of this volume.

I shall now solicit attention to a brief recital of the particular objects which I have had in view, for the purpose of showing more clearly the conceptions which I entertain of what is wanted, for a lucid and intelligible version and explanation of this eminently engaging and instructive portion of the sacred volume of inspiration.

I. My first object has been, to put into the hands of such persons as may think proper to peruse it, a work marked by perspicuity and clearness, rather than by recondite learning, or an enlarged attention to minute verbal criticism. I was desirous that my readers might have a book which should assist the less informed to understand the Psalms, in order that they might, with the greater advantage, peruse them, as a perennial source of religious instruction and of devout affection. Should I fail to attain this object, my greatest reward will be lost.

II. It appeared to me to be desirable, in the prosecution of the purpose which I have mentioned, that the form and substance of the version contained in the English Bible, which have been hallowed by the use of it for many ages, should not be materially disturbed: as a translation altogether remodelled is likely to interrupt the associations, both of thought and language, which have been the growth of many perusals, and thus to present an old and valued friend in a dress so unusual as to excite suspicions with regard to his identity. In the Introduction which follows this Preface there will be found a reference to the translation of Isaiah, by Bishop Lowth, and of the four Gospels, by Dr. G. Campbell, of Aberdeen,—both of them works distinguished by the very elegant, accurate, and generally satisfactory manner in which they are executed. These valuable productions have, however, failed to secure the general perusal and admiration to which they are justly entitled; and this has, I imagine, originated chiefly in the very different forms which

they have assumed, under the hands of these eminent translators and critics. Under the influence of this view I have, in not a few instances, restricted myself from adopting a different phraseology from what I probably should have preferred, had not the rule which I have indicated appeared to be worthy of constant regard and attention.

III. As there are few of the Psalms which do not, in addition to the plainest version which I could accomplish, require further elucidation in some parts of them, I have attached such explanations to these passages as seemed to be requisite, though it was not at all my intention to produce a continued commentary. Much greater advantage will, I have no doubt, accrue to the reader, from the constant exercise of his own attentive consideration, than is likely to result from a lengthened and universal commentary, in which every thing is attempted to be explained, but which frequently is productive, by its prolixity, of weariness and disgust. I have placed great dependance upon the Introductions which are prefixed to the Psalms; and these, together with the analyses which are united with them, will be found, I hope, of considerable assistance towards the communication of a clear conception of the sense of these divine compositions. With relation to the Explanatory Notes that are attached to each of the Psalms, I beg to say, that I have not consciously omitted to offer, in any one instance, such explications as appeared to me to be requisite; nor can my work be justly accused of proceeding in the track of other writers, so as to copy, without investigation, their remarks: a method of writing which is frequently found to perpetuate a series of erroneous judgments, and to establish, by long tradition, mistakes which become injurious, in proportion to the length of time and the number of instances through which such errors are propagated.

It was my design to direct attention to some of the passages in the common version, which appear to me to stand most in need of emendation: but as I have made the alterations, in my

own version, of all these passages which seemed to me to be requisite, I shall decline the somewhat invidious undertaking of bringing a number of them together. I had, indeed, selected nearly fifty such passages, with the design of pointing out the obscurity in which they are involved, and their want of conformity with the true meaning of the sacred writers; but it seems sufficient to have indicated their existence, and to content myself with a request to my readers, that when they experience difficulty in apprehending the meaning of the common English version, they will turn to the respective corresponding places in the version and explanations which are now respectfully submitted to them.

INTRODUCTION.

THE design of this Introduction is not to deliver a eulogium on the sacred book, a new version of which is now respectfully presented to such readers of it as are desirous of improving their acquaintance with its contents. The beauty and excellence of the inspired hymns, which are brought together in it, are too well understood, and too justly appreciated, to require, or indeed to admit of, any remarks for such a purpose.

Not less needless is it to descant, at large, on the authority by which its truth and genuineness are supported. From its earliest promulgation to the present day, it has been esteemed by the Church of God, as one of its richest possessions: and has attracted, from the wise and good of all successive ages, the most devout regard and the most assiduous perusal. It has shed its celestial light over the path of multitudes of travellers to that heaven of perfect love and transporting praise whence it descended; has poured ineffable peace and consolation into the bosoms of myriads of sad and disconsolate mourners; and has prompted the praises and thanksgivings of its own exquisite and sublime melodies, to endless numbers whose hearts have beat in unison with its heavenly strains.

The Jewish nation, whence these divine compositions were communicated, transmitted them to succeeding ages, with a fidelity so remote from all suspicion of unhallowed interpolation, and from

every stain of designed corruption, that no breath of accusation, on this topic, ever escaped the lips of the omniscient Saviour, who censured, with unsparing severity and openness, the superstition, hypocrisy, and flagrant iniquities, by which that infatuated and devoted people were overwhelmed. The blessed Redeemer evermore refers to this book, as the herald of his appearance among men: and his Apostles continually cite its declarations, as authoritative testimonies, in support of the doctrine which they delivered. Saints, martyrs, fathers, and the entire Christian Church, have borne it down to our own times as a

κτῆμα τε ἐς αἰέ,*

“an ever-during monument,” and one of the most precious deposits that could be entrusted to their successors. In every period it has formed the subject of innumerable translations, illustrations, commentaries, and citations, which ascertain its existence, and its freedom from every taint of corruption, from the time of Christ’s ministry to the present age.

If this book were not attested by such “a cloud of witnesses,” its own intrinsic character, and the times and circumstances of its composition, would afford an irrefragable argument of its heavenly descent: for it presents conceptions of the supreme majesty and unrivalled glory of the Deity, of his universal dominion, of the sanctity of his laws and government, such as no heathen sages, no human philosophy have ever disclosed. It represents the benignity and placableness of the Most High towards the sons of men, in the most engaging and attractive lights: while it portrays, in prophetic and mystic characters, the advent and triumph of that illustrious King, who unites incomprehensible condescension and love with the surpassing glories

* Thucydides.

of a reign, which is circumscribed by no limits but those of immensity and eternity. This collection of sublime poesy, to which the genius of western and oriental lore has produced no parallel, originated among a people, obscure, superstitious, and despised; refined by no polite learning, and ornamented by no endowments of science; the inhabitants of an inconsiderable tract on the borders of the Mediterranean, and separated from all the nations of the earth by a religion which rendered them the objects of scorn, odium, and persecution. Yet, from a source so unpromising, issued these songs of Zion, which have won for themselves the admiration of the most cultivated nations, the eulogies of the learned, the delight of the wise and the good, and the affectionate regard of the pious, who have found in them a never-failing solace in this land of their pilgrimage.

An attentive consideration of the facts which have now been recited will show, that a detailed account of the evidence, truth, and excellence of the Book of Psalms, would be altogether superfluous: and I shall, therefore, proceed to offer a brief account of the purpose for which this publication has been undertaken.

No earnest and inquisitive reader of the common version of the Psalms can be unaware, that a considerable degree of obscurity is found in them. On some passages, indeed, of this version, it is very difficult to fix any distinct or definite meaning; and a much larger number, where the sentiment is capable of being placed in a clearer light, and with greater effect, may readily be found. It is matter of regret, that such remarks are applicable, more or less, to most of the books which compose the volume of the Bible.

Many persons, eminent both for learning and piety, have made known, at different times, their dissatisfaction with this state of

things, and have expressed a strong desire that it should be remedied. It is not meant by this to insinuate, that the learned and venerable persons, to whose labours we are indebted for the translation of the Bible which is now in general use, were either unskilful or unfaithful in discharging the office which was assigned to them. Neither is it intended to suggest doubts to those who are unable to judge for themselves, respecting the general fidelity or usefulness of that version, as if it were deficient in any of the fundamental truths which make up the revelation of God to man. This can scarcely, if at all, be said of the most defective versions of the Bible; and the unlearned may rest assured that, in the English Scriptures, they have placed before them every important truth and precept of revelation. It is, notwithstanding, greatly to be regretted, that blemishes, which impair the beauty and obscure the sense of many parts of this divine volume, should be permitted to remain, age after age, without any effective steps being taken to remove them.

It may, I trust, without presumption be intimated, that the erudition and the vast means of every kind which are in possession of the Universities of England for effecting so important a benefit, cannot be applied to a nobler or more appropriate purpose. Other pursuits of science, taste, and literary curiosity, are, I own, great ornaments of human life, and, at the same time, confer inestimable advantages on society at large. But what, may we not inquire,—what is the worth of the most accomplished attainments of literature, or the profoundest acquirements of science, when compared with an accurate and extensive acquaintance with those living oracles which are destined to enlighten the mind and to refine the heart, by dissipating their prejudices, and withdrawing them from the gross and terrene affections, so as to elevate the thoughts now, and at no distant period the soul itself, to the possession

and enjoyment of the all-perfect and all-satisfying good which is in reserve for the true disciples of the blessed Redeemer? What is the genuine value of the acutest emendations of Greek or Roman authors, or of the most skilful and splendid editions of their exquisite remains, if these, which may be prodigies of erudition and of ingenuity, are contrasted with an improvement of that volume, whose pages are "able to make men wise unto salvation?" The most important discoveries of science, and the most accurate delineations of the orbits and times of comets, and other celestial or terrestrial phenomena, partially valuable as they confessedly are, sink into entire worthlessness, when set against the advancement of whatever is associated with the future and imperishable welfare of human souls. These manifest truisms are not recorded by one who was never smitten by the charms of literature and science, and who is incapable of feeling delight, even from small acquisitions of ancient or modern lore, which he would gladly make: they are the natural results of a belief that there is something more momentous than Greek or Latin, more interesting than the diagrams of geometry, and more truly worthy of the powers and faculties of man, than algebraic or fluxional calculations.

The want of which I am disposed to complain, can be satisfactorily supplied only by an association of men of parts, learning, and cultivated taste, and especially of christian feeling; so wise as to discard all fanciful theories, and so faithful as to sanction nothing but pure and simple truth. Happy had it been if scholars of the last and present age, endowed with such qualities, had prepared a version of the Holy Scriptures, as perfect as the ample means and appliances to which they have access might have conducted them, before the immense multiplication of copies of the authorized translation had been spread over the land, and

conveyed to the ends of the earth, by the beneficent institution of Bible and Missionary Societies! It may justly be deemed surprising that so much labour, expense, and erudition, should have been employed in endeavours to accomplish a correct text of the Hebrew and Greek original Scriptures, and that men of consideration should have regarded, apparently with entire indifference, the greatest benefit that can result from these endeavours,—the correct emendation of that version, which is the sole medium of imparting the knowledge of God's word to the numberless millions who can avail themselves of no other. The exertions of Mill, Wetstein, Griesbach, Kennicott, De Rossi, &c. &c. must be judged to fail of a full reward, until the utmost practicable improvement has been made in the translation, which is to engage the attention of by far the majority of the christian world. Grammarians, lexicographers, and critics, have but ill discharged the obligations that lie upon them, while the vast stores which they have amassed are locked up in recesses, inaccessible to at least nineteen-twentieths of mankind.

The writer of this Introduction is reluctant to dismiss this subject, without adverting to the evident judgment of others, many of them far better qualified than himself to pronounce a decision on the desirableness and necessity of an emended version of the whole Bible. I shall comprise all I mean to say on this topic, in a reference to the numerous versions of individual books of the Scriptures which have issued from the press of Great Britain within the course of the last sixty or seventy years. These versions, many of which are of very great value, have proceeded from the labours of learned prelates and professors, and other eminent persons, and fully disclose the opinions which they formed in relation to this subject. I will specify but two names which are prefixed to their invaluable productions,—the learned and elegant Bishop Lowth, and the not less

learned, and perhaps more acute and perspicacious Dr. George Campbell;—men than whom none have lived more competent to form sound and accurate judgments on such matters. These erudite persons have recorded, by the writing and publication of their respective versions of the prophecy of Isaiah, and the four books of the Evangelists, the deliberate convictions of their judgment respecting the practicability and usefulness of a corrected translation of the Holy Scriptures. Had I the audience of dignified Professors, of the Heads of Houses, and of learned Fellows of Colleges, I might perhaps put, with becoming deference, the inquiry,—Is it now too late to accomplish any such good work? or is it premature, from the expectation of larger and more sufficient means than are already in possession?

Some degree of the apparent disregard which is shown to a revision and emendation of the common version, may, I beg permission to add, be traced to the exaggerated commendations of it which are so frequently promulgated: men often come to believe at length in the truth of assertions which are perpetually made, but which a thorough and candid investigation would prove to be unfounded; so that they not merely themselves acquiesce in these vulgar errors, but are prone to regard with a suspicious eye the motives of those who will not be imposed upon by allegations which they know to be destitute of equivalent support.

It occurs to me to remark here, that if some person or persons of opulence would imitate the munificence to which we are indebted for the Bridgewater Treatises, we might hope to see this important desideratum supplied. We are now amply furnished with defences against the direct attacks of scepticism and infidelity; why should we not be equally armed against the less manifest, but not much less dangerous influences, against which the multitude can be effectually

secured, only by diffusing among them the most perfect and accurate transcript of the Holy Scriptures, which the beneficence and erudition of the present times can produce? The experience of many years plainly shows, that no private efforts to produce an improved version of the Bible will succeed, so far as to give it general currency, or induce the public at large to adopt it, in preference to that which is now in use. A more decisive stamp of authority than can be impressed by one or several individuals, however learned, or in all respects qualified for the important undertaking, is essential to secure a universal, or even general reception of it. The authority, however, let it be understood, which is intended, is not that which our civil governors are able to impart. A royal charter, an order in council, or an act of parliament, is altogether without competency in this case. The temper of men, at this period, would incline them to refuse acquiescence in such a species of authority. The only authority to which Christians of all parties would bow, must be drawn from the acknowledged skill, fidelity, impartiality, and general qualifications of the persons who should engage in the execution of such a work. If some of the most distinguished members of the two Universities would form an association for this excellent purpose, and freely invite the cooperation of learned and candid individuals belonging to the several communions of Christians in the United Kingdom, all pledging themselves to a fair and impartial arrangement and distribution of labour, the object would be accomplished: the more discerning and better informed readers of the Scriptures would gladly accept the boon thus offered; and, through their agency, there is good reason to believe that the generality would gradually transfer their attention and regard to it.

I shall terminate this discourse, already too long, by observing that the Book of Psalms has been the subject of much consideration

for several past years to me ; and that, had any work on this Book come into my hands, at all corresponding with the objects which I have in view, the present publication would not have been undertaken. Its design is to form a version, on the basis of the common translation, which, it is hoped, may be in some measure more perspicuous and intelligible ; and to illustrate the sense, where it may appear to be needed, by short explanatory notes. A few critical observations, in support of the alterations that may be made, will be placed at the end of the volume ; and an Appendix, containing three or four brief dissertations on some of the more difficult topics which are connected with the interpretation of the Psalms.

As great assistance may often be derived from a previous history of the Psalm that may be under consideration, such a history, when attainable, accompanied by a short analysis of the contents, will be prefixed to each of these sacred poems.

HACKNEY, *March 1, 1837.*

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THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

PSALM I.

THIS Psalm was most probably composed by David; and it seems to have been placed at the head of the collection on account of its general character, which renders it a suitable introduction to the whole. It pronounces an elegant eulogium on all who assiduously study the divine law; and puts a vivid contrast between the righteous and the wicked. Nothing is known respecting the time, or occasion, of its being written.

- 1 BLESSED is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked;
Nor standeth in the way of sinners;
Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers:
- 2 But who delighteth in the law of Jehovah,
And meditateth on his law by day and by night.
- 3 For he is like a tree planted near rivers of water,
That bringeth forth its fruit in its season,
And its leaf fadeth not:
All, therefore, which he doeth, prospereth.
- 4 The wicked are not so:
But are like chaff, which the wind driveth away.
- 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in judgment,
Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
- 6 For Jehovah approveth the way of the righteous;
But the way of the wicked shall perish.

5. *Shall not stand in judgment.*]—This is not to be restricted to the general and final judgment of the world. The meaning is, that the wicked will be convicted in every trial, all their projects will fail, all their happiness be irretrievably ruined, and themselves separated from the righteous, whose conduct God approves, and of whose cause he is the unchangeable guardian. Such a distribution of good and

evil was, to a considerable extent, displayed in temporal things, during the continuance of the Mosaic dispensation; and was eminently so in the case of David himself. The whole was so arranged, as to indicate the moral character of the divine government; and to presignify the final distinction that will be put between those who fear God, and those who fear him not.

PSALM II.

WE are instructed by Acts iv. 25, that this Psalm was written by David, and that it relates to the kingdom of the Messiah. No sufficient reason can be alleged to show that it has any application to David himself, though it is a common opinion that this was its first purpose, and that it applies to the Messiah only in a secondary sense. It is, however, quite evident that several of the expressions contained in it cannot, without great license of interpretation, be referred to any recorded circumstances in David's history; whereas the whole is strictly characteristic of the reign of the Messiah, and is free from every degree of hyperbole when thus understood. The highest authority assures us that David was a prophet, Acts iii. 20; and we find that several of his Psalms are immediately descriptive of the kingdom and glory of Christ: and since nothing is found in the present Psalm that renders it inapplicable to this transcendent theme, we are authorized to regard it as its exclusive subject.

The opinions of Jewish interpreters are not very conclusive on such matters; yet it is not altogether without satisfaction we find, that the application of this Psalm to the Messiah was universally adopted by the most ancient of them, and that their modern successors have, by their own confession, applied it to David, from an apprehension of its otherwise favouring Christianity. *Vide* Rosenmüller. Arg. Ps. 2.

The poem opens by introducing the anointed King himself as the speaker, immediately subsequent to his resurrection, by which he was demonstrated to be the Son of God. The divine Sovereign describes the opposition that was made to his exaltation by the princes and rulers of the world; he expresses the utter impotency of their attempts; and exhorts them to lay aside their impious purposes, lest they should be overwhelmed in the inevitable ruin that awaits his adversaries.

- 1 WHY do the nations rage,
And the peoples imagine a vain thing?
- 2 The kings of the earth set themselves,
And the rulers take counsel together
Against Jehovah and against his Anointed:
- 3 "Let us break their bands asunder,
"And cast away their cords from us."
- 4 He that sitteth in the heavens will laugh;
The Lord will have them in derision.

4. *He that sitteth in the heavens will laugh, &c.*—Let it not be imagined that the Most High exults over the crimes and miseries of sinful mortals. His perfect benignity and goodness place him

infinitely beyond the suspicion of being capable of such emotions. He solemnly asserts that he derives no pleasure from human suffering: "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of

- 5 Then will he speak unto them in his wrath,
And vex them in his hot displeasure:
- 6 "Yet have I anointed my King,
"Upon my holy hill of Zion."
- 7 I will declare the decree:
Jehovah hath said unto me,
"Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.
- 8 "Ask me, and I will give the nations for thy inheritance,
"And the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.
- 9 "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron;
"Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."
- 10 Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings!
Be instructed, ye judges of the earth!
- 11 Serve Jehovah with fear,
And rejoice with trembling.
- 12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye suddenly perish:
For his wrath will shortly be kindled.
Blessed are all they that put their trust in him!

the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." Ezek. xxxiii. 11. It would betray an equal ignorance of the character of "the blessed God," and of the just interpretation of the sacred writings, to derive such conclusions from this, or similar representations. The Psalms are poetical compositions. Poetry delights in figurative language; and Hebrew poetry, especially, in the boldest figures. Tropes, allegories, personifications, and hyperboles are its chosen ornaments. To take them literally would prove as injurious to the truth of religion, as it would be hostile to the first principles of correct interpretation. In the case before us, as in a thousand others in the Old Testament, human passions and affections are ascribed to God, for the purpose of illustration and impression; and are to be regarded, not as philosophical results, but as the vivid analogies which an ardent imagination selects, to communicate life and vigour to the conceptions which it aims to impart.

7. *This day have I begotten thee.*]—

Figures taken from generation and birth are often used in the Scriptures to denote great changes of condition or character. The Apostle Paul interprets these words of the resurrection of Christ, Acts xiii. 33. His humiliation was then terminated, and he assumed the regal dignity. He was the Son of God, from "the beginning," but he was shown to be so by this act of divine power. The text before us is prophetic of this great change in the apparent state and condition of our blessed Redeemer; and has certainly no reference to an eternal generation, which has frequently been argued from it. *Vide* Additional Notes.

12. *Kiss the Son.*]—The reverence that is due to the anointed King is intimated by this symbolical precept. See 1 Sam. i. 10. It was the practice among the Hebrews, and other ancient nations, to manifest their respect for the objects of their idolatrous worship also by this rite. 1 Kings xix. 18; Hos. xiii. 2. Kissing the hand of the sovereign, as an expression of homage, is in well-known use in this country.

PSALM III.

THE inscription which is prefixed to this Psalm corresponds very satisfactorily with its contents, which afford an instructive example of the happy effects of a stedfast reliance upon divine power and goodness.

A PSALM OF DAVID, WHEN HE WAS FLYING FROM ABSALOM HIS SON.

- 1 O JEHOVAH ! how do they increase that trouble me !
Many are they that rise up against me.
- 2 Many are saying concerning me,
“ There is no help for him in God.” SELAH.
- 3 But thou, O Jehovah ! art a shield around me ;
My glory, and the lifter-up of my head.
- 4 I cry unto Jehovah with my voice,
And he answereth me from his holy hill. SELAH.
- 5 I lie down, I sleep, I awake ;
For Jehovah sustaineth me.
- 6 I will not be afraid of the tens of thousands of people
That compass me round about.
- 7 Arise, O Jehovah ! save me, O my God !
For thou smitest all my enemies upon the cheek-bone :
Thou breakest the teeth of the wicked.
- 8 Deliverance is from Jehovah.
Thy blessing be upon thy people !

1. *How do they increase, &c.*] — See 2 Sam. xv. 12. “ The people increased continually with Absalom.”

2. *Selah.*]—The most probable opinion respecting this word, the sense of which is greatly controverted, is, that it is a musical note intended to direct the persons by whom the Psalm was sung; but what was its particular import it is now impossible to determine. It occurs many times.

4. *From his holy hill.*]—The ark of God was placed on Mount Zion, in the midst

of the tabernacle which David had pitched for it. 2 Sam. vi. 17; 2 Sam. v. 7. Here Jehovah condescended to dwell, manifesting his regal authority as in an earthly palace, by the symbols of his presence. To this abode of the divine glory the worshippers of God directed their addresses, and hence were wont to receive answers.

7. *Upon the cheek-bone.*]—Wicked men are here compared to savage beasts, that are rendered incapable of inflicting injury by having their jaws and teeth broken.

PSALM IV.

THE probable occasion of the composition of this Psalm was the rebellion and usurpation of Absalom. The title ascribes it to David; and the contents evidently relate to a period when his regal dignity was assailed, and his character calumniated by his adversaries. Other occasions have been fixed upon, but none is, in my apprehension, so satisfactory as that which is now assigned. The Psalm consists of earnest entreaties for divine aid; of serious expostulation with the persons who were conspiring against their lawful sovereign; accompanied by warnings of the fatal consequences which they were bringing upon themselves: and concludes with an expression of the satisfaction and peace which its devout author drew from his conscious possession of the divine favour.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. ON STRINGED INSTRUMENTS. A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 ANSWER me when I call, O my righteous God !
Thou hast delivered me from distress ;
Have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.
- 2 How long, ye sons of men, will ye revile my dignity ;
Will ye love vanity, and seek after falsehood ? SELAH.
- 3 But know ye, that Jehovah hath chosen a good man for himself :
Jehovah heareth when I call upon him.
- 4 Commit not iniquity in your anger ;
Commune with your heart upon your bed, and be silent. SELAH.
- 5 Offer righteous sacrifices,
And put your trust in Jehovah.
- 6 Many are saying, Who will show us any good ?
O Jehovah ! lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us !

2. *Will ye revile my dignity.* Literally, *Shall my glory be for shame.*—His rebellious subjects and his unnatural son had driven him from the metropolis of his kingdom, had exposed him to sufferings and contumely, and were calumniating his character. He therefore demands to what extent they would carry their atrocious proceedings.

— *Will ye love vanity, &c.*—By vanity and falsehood he means the futile and unjust efforts which they were making to sustain their rebellion, and the ruin which their unrighteous machinations were bringing upon them.

3. *A good man.*—David thus describes himself, not for the purpose of vaunting his own worth, but to convince his adversaries of their ingratitude towards him, in thus requiting the clemency and humanity by which his reign had been distinguished, and which many of them had largely experienced. He thus also suggests to them that God, who had selected him to be the governor of his people, and who had designated him as “a man after his own heart,” would not permit them eventually to triumph over him.

6. *Lift thou up the light, &c.*—A significant figure, expressive of the benignity

- 7 Thou puttest more gladness into my heart
 Than they have, when their corn and wine abound.
 8 I lie down, and sleep at once,
 For thou, O Jehovah ! alone, makest me dwell in safety.
-

PSALM V.

SOME interpreters are of opinion that this Psalm was occasioned by the troubles to which the malevolence of Saul exposed David : others think that it originated in Absalom's conspiracy. The latter appears to me to be the most likely. There is a close coincidence between ver. 10 and 2 Sam. xv. 31, where David, in the depth of his distress, implores that the counsel of Ahitophel may be turned into foolishness.

The Psalm affords an impressive example of the fervency and perseverance of genuine devotion : it illustrates the sanctity of God's character, and the necessity of sanctity in those who aspire to his favour : it indicates the ruin of those unhappy men whose words are fair, while their hearts are filled with malevolence : and it concludes with an ardent aspiration on behalf of all those, whose rectitude proves them to be the saints and servants of the most Holy God.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. ON WIND INSTRUMENTS. A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 GIVE ear to my words, O Jehovah !
 Consider my meditation.
 2 Harken to the voice of my cry, my King ! and my God !
 For unto thee do I pray.
 3 O Jehovah ! in the morning thou shalt hear my voice :
 In the morning will I direct *my prayer* unto thee, and I will watch :
 4 For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness,
 Neither shall an evil man dwell with thee.
 5 The proud shall not stand in thy sight ;
 Thou hatest all the workers of iniquity.

which beams forth from the smiles of affectionate friends and benefactors, towards the objects of their love and favour.

PSALM V.

3. *And I will watch.*—The original word is expressive of expectation, which looks abroad and around to the utmost

distance, in order to descry the first appearances of aid that present themselves. *Vide* Isa. xxi. 5.

5. *The proud.*—By these are meant arrogant, empty, foolish boasters, who glory in their folly and impiety. Such were Absalom and his confederates.

- 6 Thou wilt destroy them that speak falsehood ;
A bloody and deceitful man Jehovah abhorreth.
- 7 But as for me, through the multitude of thy mercy, I shall come
into thy house,
And in thy fear will I worship at thy holy temple.
- 8 Lead me, O Jehovah ! according to thy righteousness ;
On account of my enemies, make thy way straight before me.
- 9 For there is no truth in their mouth ;
Their inward part is very wickedness ;
Their throat is an open sepulchre ;
They flatter with their tongue.
- 10 Destroy thou them, O God !
Let them fall by their own counsels :
Cast them down for the multitude of their transgressions,
For they are rebellious against thee.
- 11 But let all them that trust in thee rejoice,
Let them ever shout for joy, for thou defendest them ;
Let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee :
- 12 For thou, O Jehovah ! wilt bless the righteous ;
With favour wilt thou compass him, as with a shield.

PSALM VI.

THERE is nothing contained in this Psalm that enables us to form a decisive opinion respecting the occasion on which it was written, further than that it was during a season of deep distress. The trouble into which David was brought by the injurious conduct of his adversaries, produced the most gloomy and painful apprehensions upon him, and affected his health in a serious degree. In addition to these troubles, he was evidently suffering from consciousness of his own misconduct, and alarmed lest the displeasure of God should be awakened against

8. *Lead me, &c.*—By the righteousness of God, in this place, we are to understand his veracity, and faithfulness to his engagements. This agrees with the judgment of Calvin. The sense of the passage may be thus expressed : “ My enemies are malevolent and treacherous ; they will circumvent and ensnare me, if possible ; therefore I will not rely upon

my own prudence and sagacity, but upon the guidance which God has promised to extend to me : Show me, therefore, O Jehovah ! thy way ; make it plain before me ; that way, by which I may be delivered from their stratagems, and may be placed in perfect safety : do this, in agreement with thy truth, and the promises which thou hast made to me.”

him. He begins, therefore, with deprecating the anger of God, and earnestly imploring his mercy; he proceeds to describe the sorrows by which he was agitated; and concludes by expressing a joyful expectation, drawn from his confidence in God's veracity and goodness, that he should be delivered from all his distresses.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. ON STRINGED INSTRUMENTS. UPON THE OCTACHORD.
A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 O JEHOVAH! rebuke me not in thy anger :
Neither correct me in thy hot displeasure.
- 2 Have mercy upon me, O Jehovah! for I am very feeble.
O Jehovah! heal me, for my bones are agitated.
- 3 My soul also is exceedingly distressed ;
But thou, O Jehovah! how long *wilt thou be angry?*
- 4 Return, O Jehovah! deliver me ;
Save me for thy mercies' sake.
- 5 For in death there is no remembrance of thee ;
In Hades, who shall give thee thanks?
- 6 I am weary with my groaning ;
All the night make I my bed to swim ;
I melt my couch with my tears.
- 7 My eye is shrunk with grief ;
It is become old, on account of all my enemies.

1. *Rebuke me not, &c.*—It is evident that David was conscious of having brought upon himself his present sufferings by his transgression; he therefore entreats that God would not act towards him as a justly incensed Sovereign, but would exercise the merciful correction of a compassionate Parent. It is most likely that this Psalm was written subsequently to the death of Uriah the Hittite.

2. *My bones are agitated.*—His anguish was so extreme as to reduce his strength, and affect his whole frame.

3. *But thou, O Jehovah, &c.*—This abrupt exclamation is characteristic of intense anguish. The supplement by which the sense is completed is taken from a passage somewhat similar, in Psalm lxxix. 5: "How long, Lord, wilt thou be angry? for ever?"

4. *Return, &c.*—Absence and desertion are indications of displeasure; he therefore prays that God will no longer express his anger by leaving him a prey to grief and to his adversaries, but return to him with marks of forgiveness and favour.

5. *In death there is no remembrance of thee.*—It is almost inevitable to inquire, respecting these words, whether the writer was ignorant of the existence of a state of life separate from the present world? As there are several other passages in the Psalms, as well as in other parts of the Old Testament, which suggest such an inquiry, I shall refer the reader to the Appendix, No. II., for a statement of what appears to me to be the most satisfactory solution of this difficulty.

- 8 Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity,
For Jehovah heareth the voice of my weeping :
9 Jehovah heareth my supplication :
Jehovah receiveth my prayer.
10 All my enemies shall be ashamed, and greatly terrified :
They shall be turned back, and be ashamed suddenly.

PSALM VII.

THIS Psalm was probably written, either when David was in the wilderness of En-gedi, 1 Sam. xxiv., or in that of Ziph, 1 Sam. xxvi. On both these occasions Saul was pursuing him with relentless malignity, urged on by the accusations of David's enemies, of whom Cush seems to have been one. It is immaterial to which of these occurrences we assign the composition. In both David was exposed to imminent peril of losing his life. The Psalm commences with imploring deliverance from the dangers to which its author was exposed from the fury of his adversaries, who were savage and murderous as ravenous beasts. It proceeds solemnly to disclaim the crimes with which David was charged, and to entreat an equitable decision of the controversy between his enemies and himself.

SHIGGAION, *i.e.* A SONG OF DAVID, WHICH HE SANG TO JEHOVAH, CONCERNING
THE WORDS OF CUSH, A BENJAMITE.

- 1 O JEHOVAH ! my God, in thee do I put my trust :
Save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me :
2 Lest one tear me like a lion,
Rending me in pieces, while there is none to deliver.
3 O Jehovah ! my God, if I have done this—
If there be iniquity in my hands ;
4 If I have requited with evil one that was at peace with me,
Or have wronged him that without cause is my enemy,—

TITLE. *Shiggaion*.]—This word is supposed to mean a song, so denominated from some peculiarity, either in the subject of it, or in the character of the metre and the music.

TITLE. *Cush*.]—Nothing is known respecting this person, further than what may be collected from the Psalm and title. It is evident that he was a partizan of Saul, and an enemy to David.

3. *If I have done this*, *i.e.* the wickedness with which my enemies charge me.]—The abrupt and imperfect enunciation of this passage is expressive of the pain which David suffered from the calumnious insinuations that were propagated against him by the adherents of Saul; which, however, he indignantly repels.

4. *Vide Additional Notes.*

- 5 Let the adversary persecute me, and take me ;
 Let him trample my life upon the earth,
 And let my glory dwell in the dust. SELAH.
- 6 Arise, O Jehovah ! in thy anger ;
 Lift up thy hand against the rage of my enemies ;
 And awake for me the judgment which thou hast commanded.
- 7 So shall the assembly of the people surround thee ;
 For their sake, therefore, return to the high place.
- 8 Jehovah judgeth the people :
 Judge me, O Jehovah ! according to my righteousness,
 And according to my integrity that is within me.
- 9 O let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end,
 But establish thou the just :
 For the righteous God trieth the hearts and the reins.
- 10 My defence is in God,
 Who saveth the upright in heart.
- 11 God is a righteous Judge ;
 And God is angry every day.
- 12 If a man turn not, he whetteth his sword ;
 He bendeth his bow, and maketh it ready :
- 13 He also prepareth for him the instruments of death :
 He fashioneth his arrows for the persecutors.
- 14 Lo ! one travaileth with iniquity ;
 He conceiveth mischief, and bringeth forth falsehood :
- 15 He diggeth a pit, and scoopeth it out,
 But he falleth into the snare which he hath made.

5. *Let my glory dwell in the dust.*—*i. e.* Let my reputation and honour be taken from me, and let them perish together with the strength and beauty of my person.

6. *Awake for me, &c.*—The divine judgment is here represented as if it were inattentive and asleep ; and the great Judge himself, as if he had withdrawn from his tribunal. The Psalmist, therefore, prays that God would return to the high place,—referring to the elevated tribunals whence magistrates deliver their judgments, in the presence of surround-

ing multitudes,—and convince the people of his innocency, and of the regard which God paid to truth and rectitude of conduct.

14. *Lo ! one travaileth, &c.*—The progress of impiety is thus depicted by a comparison with the process of the conception and birth of animals, especially the human : a figure not unfrequent in the Scriptures, by which the laborious efforts of wicked men to accomplish their nefarious purposes are expressed, and the disappointment which they often experience.

- 16 His mischief returneth upon his own head ;
 His violence also cometh down upon the crown of his head.
 17 I will praise Jehovah, according to his righteousness :
 I will celebrate the name of Jehovah, the High God.

PSALM VIII.

THE occasion on which this Psalm was written is unknown. The evident design of it was to celebrate the surpassing excellency of God, as it is displayed in the works of his hands: and to express his infinite condescension and benignity to men, by the ample donation of dominion over the inferior creation, with which he has distinguished them.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. UPON GITTITH, *i. e.* AN INSTRUMENT OF MUSIC SO CALLED. A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 O JEHOVAH ! our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth !
 Who hast set thy glory above the heavens.
 2 Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast provided strength,
 On account of thy enemies,
 That thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.
 3 When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,
 The moon and the stars, which thou hast formed ;
 4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him ?
 And the son of man, that thou regardest him ?

1. *Thy name.*]—The name of God is his glory,—the honour and reputation of his all-perfect nature and character. It is sometimes used for God himself, as Exod. xxiii. 21 : “ My name is in him,” *i. e.* in the angel—I am in him ; it is thus equivalent to the personal pronoun, viz. how excellent art thou !

2. *Out of the mouth, &c.*]—The sense of this passage appears to me to be, that the faculties and instincts of infants, which are so wonderfully adapted to promote their growth and advancement in life, furnish a powerful argument against irreligion and injustice, by showing the existence of a supreme intelligent power,

and the incessant providence which it exerts in perpetuating and preserving the race of man. That such is the meaning is clearly shown by the next words ; for the enemy and the avenger are those impious persons who deny the existence of God, disregard his providence, and abandon themselves to sensuality and cruelty. Such men act in opposition to the evidence which God has given of his existence and perfection, and especially to that which results from his constant care of our infant state. That persons of this description were not unknown in the time of David, many proofs are given in the Scriptures.

- 5 For thou hast made him little lower than the angels,
And hast crowned him with glory and honour.
6 Thou hast given him dominion over the works of thy hands ;
Thou hast put all things under his feet :
7 Sheep and oxen, all of them ; yea, and the beasts of the field ;
8 The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea,
Which passeth through the paths of the seas.
9 O Jehovah ! our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth !
-

PSALM IX.

THERE is so close a resemblance between this Psalm and the tenth, as to make it very likely that they were both written about the same time, and on occasions very similar. Indeed the Greek, Latin, and Arabic versions, and a few Hebrew copies, read them united as one composition. The probability, however, seems to be, that they are distinct poems. The contents of both lead to the conclusion, that they relate to the attacks which were made upon the dominions of David by his Syrian, Idumean, and Arabian neighbours. We learn from the sacred history, that David was engaged in frequent conflicts with these turbulent and treacherous adversaries ; who, in addition to their propensities to rapine and plunder, were probably urged to the deeds of violence to which these two Psalms relate, by their hatred of the religion and character of the Jews, and their apprehensions lest David's increasing power should reach to an extent that would prove very injurious to their interests.

But though these Psalms appear to have originated in such causes, there is a difference in the composition of them, sufficient to support a belief that they were distinct poems. The ninth Psalm consists almost entirely of grateful acknowledgments for the success which God had mercifully afforded to his people during former conflicts, and adverts but briefly (ver. 13,) to distresses actually existing. The tenth Psalm contains vehement reprehensions of the impious and cruel character of the enemies of Israel, and most earnest entreaties that God would arise and vindicate at once his own righteousness, as the governor of the world, and the cause of the people whom he had taken under his special protection. In both these odes the eternal dominion of the Most High, and his unchangeable righteousness, are celebrated in the loftiest terms : and in both we witness a confirmation of the hopes of pious and upright men, that to whatever extent the wicked may be permitted to prevail, their triumph will prove but of short duration. Under every dispensation of Providence we may, therefore, exercise the firmest persuasion, that as they who know, *i. e.* approve and love the name of God, will confide in him, he also will never forsake them that seek him. May this persuasion be found living and active in our hearts !

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. ON MUTH-LABBEN, *i.e.* AN INSTRUMENT OF MUSIC SO CALLED. A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 I WILL praise Jehovah with my whole heart :
I will show forth all thy marvellous works.
- 2 I will be glad, and rejoice in thee :
I will sing praise to thy name, O High God !
- 3 When my enemies were turned back,
They stumbled, and perished at thy presence :
- 4 For thou didst maintain my right and my cause ;
Thou didst sit on the throne, judging righteously.
- 5 Thou didst rebuke the nations, thou didst destroy the wicked,
Thou didst put out their name for ever and ever.
- 6 The devastations of the enemy are ended for ever :
Thou hast destroyed their cities ; their memory has perished.
- 7 But Jehovah abideth for ever :
His throne is established for judgment.
- 8 He will judge the world in righteousness :
He will minister judgment to the peoples in uprightness.
- 9 Jehovah is a fortress for the oppressed ;
A fortress, in times of distress.
- 10 They that know thy name will put their trust in thee ;
For thou, O Jehovah ! forsakest not them that seek thee.
- 11 Sing praises to Jehovah, who dwelleth in Zion :
Declare among the peoples his doings ;
- 12 For he maketh inquisition for blood ; he remembereth it :
He forgetteth not the cry of the afflicted.
- 13 Have mercy upon me, O Jehovah !
Consider what I suffer from them that hate me,
O thou, that liftest me up from the gates of death ;

6. *The devastations, &c.*—These are the devastations that had been effected by the adversaries of David and Israel. The passage is expressive of a triumphant exultation over the utter discomfiture of the enemies : a discomfiture so complete, as to render them unable to renew the work of destruction : and the honour of which

is gratefully ascribed to God, who had enabled his people to triumph so decisively.

12. *He maketh inquisition, &c.*—God animadverts upon the crimes of which his enemies are guilty, and avenges the blood which they shed, however secretly it may be done.

- 14 That I may show forth all thy praise,
 In the gates of the daughter of Zion :
 That I may rejoice in thy salvation.
- 15 The nations are sunk in the pit which they made :
 In the net which they hid, is their foot taken.
- 16 Jehovah is known by the judgment which he executeth :
 The wicked is ensnared in the work of his hands. HIGGAION.
 SELAH.
- 17 The wicked shall be turned into Hades ;
 All the nations that forget God.
- 18 For the destitute shall not always be forgotten,
 Nor the expectation of the afflicted perish for ever.
- 19 Arise, O Jehovah ! let not man prevail :
 Let the nations be judged in thy sight.
- 20 Put them in fear, O Jehovah !
 Let the nations know that they are men.

PSALM X.

THE introduction to the ninth Psalm embraces the tenth also.

- 1 WHY dost thou stand afar off, O Jehovah !
 And hide thyself, in times of trouble ?

14. *The gates of the daughter of Zion.*]—The daughter of a people is an elegant periphrasis for the people itself. It is here used for Jerusalem, the city in which the people dwelt. The gates at the entrance of the city were the place in which judicial, and other public proceedings, were carried on; and the Psalmist expresses his desire to celebrate the praises of God in the most public and solemn manner. There seems to be a contrast intended between these gates, and those gates of death mentioned in the preceding verse.

17. *Into Hades.*]—The Hebrew term, which is thus rendered, denotes the invisible state of departed spirits, into which

all men indiscriminately pass at death. It expresses neither their happiness nor misery. It appears from the common translation of Psalm xvi. 10, that the word "Hell" was originally used in the same sense, though modern usage has appropriated it to the place of future punishment. When, therefore, the Psalmist says, "the wicked shall be turned into Hades," he indicates the final overthrow of his adversaries, and the just punishment of the enemies of God and his people, by their death and complete destruction.

PSALM X.

1. *Why dost thou stand afar off?*]—The general character of this Psalm leads to

- 2 The wicked in his pride persecuteth the afflicted;
By the stratagems which they devise they lay hold upon him.
- 3 For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire,
And blesseth the spoiler whom Jehovah abhorreth.
- 4 Through his pride the wicked will not inquire;
All his thoughts are,—there is no God!
- 5 His ways are always grievous;
Thy judgments are far above out of his sight;
He scorneth all his adversaries.
- 6 He saith in his heart, I shall not be moved,
For I shall never be in adversity.
- 7 His mouth is full of cursing, and deceit, and fraud;
Mischief and wickedness are under his tongue.
- 8 He sitteth in ambush in the villages,
In secret places he murdereth the innocent;
His eyes insidiously watch the oppressed.
- 9 He lieth in wait in a secret place, as a lion in his den;
He lieth in wait to plunder the afflicted;
He plundereth the afflicted when he draggeth him into his net.

the conclusion, that it was written at an earlier period than the ninth. That Psalm is chiefly of a triumphant strain, but the present is filled with mournful complaints of the atrocity and fierceness of the foes to whom it relates; it recounts their savage deeds, expresses their atheistical propensities, and indicates the success which had hitherto attended upon their inhuman and bloody progress; while it passionately pleads with God to induce him no longer to remain an inattentive spectator of the calamities that were inflicted upon his people.

4. *The wicked will not inquire.*—The English translation supplies the word "God," which is not in the original. The sense, however, seems to be, that such rapacious destroyers as these adversaries of David are described to be, paid no regard to the evidences which God had given of his existence and righteousness; but being entirely under

the influence of their selfish and savage dispositions, overlooked every thing of this nature, and hardened themselves by their impious imaginations, either that there was no God, or that he was altogether indifferent to human conduct, ver. 11; so that they presumed they might indulge their passions with impunity.

7. *Mischief and wickedness are under his tongue.*—A metaphor taken from the venom of serpents, which is concealed within their mouths. So Psalm cxl. 3.

8. *In the villages.*—These were moveable encampments, consisting of tents, that were hastily pitched, and as hastily removed, when the purposes of rapine and plunder were accomplished, or when the approach of a superior force rendered flight expedient. These encampments served for concealment and ambush, whence assaults were made upon detached and defenceless parties and individuals. *Vide* Michaelis, Suppl. ad Lex. Heb.

- 10 The oppressed he also bringeth low,
And causeth the afflicted to fall by his strong ones.
- 11 He saith in his heart—God forgetteth,
He hideth his face, he will never behold.
- 12 Arise, O Jehovah ! O God, lift up thy hand ;
Forget not the oppressed !
- 13 Wherefore doth the wicked condemn God,
And say in his heart, Thou wilt not avenge ?
- 14 Thou seest, for thou beholdest mischief and villainy,
To requite it with thy hand :
The oppressed committeth himself unto thee ;
Thou art the helper of the friendless.
- 15 Break thou the arm of the wicked, and of the evil doer ;
Search out his wickedness till thou find none.
- 16 Jehovah is King for ever and ever.
The nations have perished out of his land.
- 17 O Jehovah ! thou hearest the desire of the afflicted,
Thou supportest their heart, thou causest thy ear to hearken ;
- 18 To decide the cause of the friendless and the oppressed,
That the man of the earth may no longer oppress.

PSALM XI.

WE have this Psalm from the pen of David ; and it appears, from the tenor of it, to have been written while he was a resident in the court of Saul. The jealousy and ill-will that were displayed towards him by Saul, roused the apprehensions of his friends ; and they advised him to consult his safety by withdrawing from the court, and taking refuge in the mountainous parts of the land of Judah, where he would have the best means of defending himself from the dangers that threatened his life. They assured him that Saul was intent upon his destruction ; and that his innocence and integrity would afford him no security. The Psalm is constructed in the form of a dialogue, in which David replies to the suggestions of his counsellors, by avowing his unshaken confidence in God, and his sure belief that he would protect him from the machinations of all his unrighteous adversaries.

10. *His strong ones.*]—As the figure is evidently taken from a beast of prey, the “strong ones” must intend his strong claws or teeth.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 IN Jehovah do I put my trust : wherefore do ye say to me,
 “ Flee, as a bird, to your mountain : [on the string.
 2 “ For lo ! the wicked bend the bow, they make ready the arrow
 “ To shoot privily at the upright in heart.
 3 “ When the foundations are destroyed,
 “ What can a righteous man do ? ”
 4 Jehovah is in his holy temple ; Jehovah’s throne is in heaven :
 His eyes behold, his eyelids try the children of men.
 5 Jehovah trieth the righteous :
 But the wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth.
 6 Upon the wicked, he will send down lightnings, fire, and sulphur ;
 The scorching wind shall be the portion of their cup.
 7 For Jehovah the righteous loveth righteousness ;
 His countenance is favourable to the upright.

PSALM XII.

THE last verse of this Psalm renders it probable that it was written during the reign of Saul. The profane and impious conduct of this prince emboldened bad and unprincipled men to make an open avowal of their unrighteous and

3. *The foundations.*]—This is a question which David’s advisers put to him. Saul, they suggest, had shown his disregard of all laws, human and divine, the only foundations of public justice and safety, when they stood in the way of his wishes : they, therefore, ask David, what security his innocence and rectitude could furnish, against the power and malevolence of a despotic prince. The noble and animated reply which follows is descriptive of the strength and fearlessness of mind which just and extensive views of the character and government of God communicate to those by whom they are entertained.

6. *He will send down lightnings, &c.*]—This is an illustration of the divine judgments upon the wicked, taken from the

fearful destruction of Sodom. Gen. xix. 14.

6. *The scorching wind.*]—By this is meant the poisonous wind, called in Arabia Smûm, or Simoom. Niebuhr, in his account of Arabia, says, that men and animals are suffocated by this wind : and that when any one is thus suffocated, or, as the Arabs express it, when his heart is broken, the blood sometimes flows out violently from the nose and ears, two hours afterwards. The corpse retains its heat for a long time ; it swells, turns blue and green ; at length, when they wish to raise it by an arm or leg, these limbs come off. By this appalling figure the portion which wicked men shall receive at the hands of God is depicted.

pernicious sentiments. We are unable to assign any specific events as occasions of the composition; but it is very expressive of the detestable conduct that was predominant among the higher ranks, the nobles, courtiers and officers, who were countenanced at this period. Such a state of things was ruinous to the public interests, and inexpressibly painful to the pious and patriotic feelings of David, and all good men. In despair of any improvement, but from divine interference, he, therefore, pathetically implores it. After lamenting the diminution of good men, he describes the impieties that were prevalent, and introduces God himself announcing his determination to put an end to the afflicted condition of his servants. The Psalmist then expresses his confidence in the divine veracity, and his expectation of the fulfilment of the assurances which God had given.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. ON SHEMINITH, *i. e.* AN INSTRUMENT OF EIGHT STRINGS. A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 **HELP**, O Jehovah! for the good man ceaseth:
For the faithful fail from among the children of men.
- 2 Men speak deceitfully one with another;
With flattering lips, and a double heart do they speak.
- 3 Jehovah will cut off all flattering lips;
The tongue that speaketh proud things;
- 4 Who say, "With our tongue will we prevail;
"Our lips are our own: who is Lord over us?"
- 5 For the oppression of the afflicted, for the sighing of the destitute,
Now will I arise, saith Jehovah;
I will set him in safety, he shall scorn him.
- 6 The words of Jehovah are pure words,
Silver refined in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.
- 7 Thou, O Jehovah! wilt keep us:
Thou wilt preserve us for ever from this generation.
- 8 The wicked walk on every side,
When worthless men are exalted.

6. *The words of Jehovah, &c.*]—The words intended are especially those that are contained in the preceding verse. The Psalmist encourages himself and his pious associates to maintain an inviolable confidence in the truth of divine promises, which he compares, with great beauty, to silver, which by repeated refining is freed from all its dross and alloy.

7. *Thou, O Jehovah!*]—In this and the next clause the English Bible reads the pronouns in the third person, which renders the passage obscure. There is a considerable diversity in the readings of the Hebrew text, as may be seen in Kennicott and De Rossi. The LXX. and the Vulg. have preserved the reading that is here adopted.

PSALM XIII.

THE long and harassing persecution that David underwent from the jealousy and ill-will of Saul, is the most probable cause of the composition of this Psalm. The vehement and reiterated exclamations that are contained in it, are strongly descriptive of the agony which the Psalmist endured, and of the distressing fears that daily pressed upon him, lest he should become a victim to the furious rancour with which he was pursued. In this deep distress he has recourse to God, whose goodness he had frequently experienced, and by a renewed exercise of dependence upon him, he gains a superiority over his desponding apprehensions, and rejoices in the hope that deliverance, though long delayed, would finally be afforded.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 How long wilt thou forget me, O Jehovah? for ever?
How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?
- 2 How long shall I be in suspense, in daily sorrow of heart?
How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?
- 3 Consider: answer me, O Jehovah! my God!
Enlighten my eyes, lest I sleep in death:
- 4 Lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed against him."
Lest my adversaries exult at my overthrow.
- 5 As for me; I trust in thy mercy, my heart rejoiceth in thy help.
I will sing to Jehovah, for he dealeth bountifully with me.

PSALM XIV.

THE most probable opinion that can be formed respecting the time when this Psalm was written is, that it was during the alarm and danger that were occasioned by Absalom's rebellion. On that occasion, great numbers of the

2. *How long shall I be in suspense?*]—The anxiety here expressed relates to the measures that were to be taken to secure himself from the vigilance and power of his formidable adversary. Every step he could take for this purpose was uncertain in its issue; and conscious as he was of the insufficiency of his means to contend against an opposition so incessant and

deadly, his breast was continually agitated by the daily recurrence of tumultuous thoughts and feelings.

3. *Enlighten my eyes.*]—This has reference to the effect upon the countenance of which joyful feelings are productive; the eye sparkles, the whole face beams with delight.

principal persons in the country joined in the revolt against David; and induced multitudes of inferior rank to unite with them. The defection seemed to be all but universal. The causes which led to this ruinous state of affairs are indicated in this Psalm, and traced up to the open impiety and secret atheism which were diffused among all classes of the people. It was impossible for David to witness the wretched condition of his people, and the atrocious crimes which dishonoured God, and brought inexpressible troubles upon himself, without deep affliction and dismay. Under the influence of these feelings he breaks forth into a vehement invective against the authors of these calamities, and portrays the mournful scene with the pen of a poet, a patriot, and a saint.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 A FOOL saith in his heart, "There is no God!"
They are corrupt, they do abominable works, none doeth good.
- 2 Jehovah looketh from heaven upon the children of men,
To see if there be any that understandeth, that seeketh God:
- 3 They are all gone aside, they are together become polluted:
None doeth good, no, not one.
- 4 Have none of the workers of iniquity any understanding?
They devour my people as they devour bread:
They call not upon Jehovah!
- 5 They shall be in great fear!
For God is among the generation of the righteous.
- 6 Ye put to shame the counsel of the afflicted,
Because Jehovah is his refuge.
- 7 O that from Zion were the deliverance of Israel!
When Jehovah bringeth back the captivity of his people,
Jacob will rejoice, Israel will be glad.

1. *A fool saith, &c.*—In Scripture wickedness is denominated folly, Gen. xxxiv. 7; and wicked men are called fools, 1 Sam. xxv. 25, and such they assuredly are: though the appellation is here used to express rather the obliquity of the heart than any weakness of the intellectual faculties.

4. *Have none of the workers, &c.*—This interrogation is addressed to the authors and promoters of the impious rebellion that was now raging: these men, in order to gratify their own passions, and to establish their usurped power, were

subjecting the people at large to the greatest calamities; while they themselves were altogether unmoved at the sight of the miseries which they were creating, careless of every thing but their own pride and ambition.

5. *They shall be in great fear, &c.*—The Psalmist here predicts the failure of the conspiracy, and the signal protection which God would, in the end, confer on David, and those faithful adherents to him, who were ready to expose their lives and substance in defence of his rights.

PSALM XV.

WE learn from 2 Sam. vi. 17, that when David had brought the ark from the house of Obededom to Zion, he placed it in the tabernacle which he had prepared for it, and celebrated the joyful event by a solemn and public festival. The Psalm before us was probably composed to form a part of the sacred service of that day. As a strong propensity had always been shown by the Israelites to substitute ceremonial institutions, in place of the sanctity and rectitude which the law enjoined, the Psalm expresses, in strong terms, the necessity of these qualifications to all acceptable worship of God. By entirely omitting the mention of every thing relative to the rites and ceremonies to which they were so much attached, the Psalmist intimates that they were without value, in the absence of those essential qualities.

No occasion could be more appropriate to a purpose of this kind than such a solemn festival. Numerous sacrifices were offered, the service was performed with the greatest splendour, and was attended by a vast concourse of nobles, magistrates, priests, and people. The tabernacle was designed to be God's earthly palace, at which his worshippers were to be assiduous attendants; it was, therefore, of the highest moment that they should be duly instructed in all which pertained to the honour of God, and the acceptableness of the services which were to be presented to him. Happy would it have been for that people, if they had thus shown their devotedness to the holy and spiritual King, in whose favour they professed to glory, and whose subjects and children they boasted themselves to be!

A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 O JEHOVAH! who shall abide in thy tabernacle?
Who shall dwell on thy holy hill?
- 2 He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness,
And speaketh the truth that is in his heart.
- 3 On whose tongue there is no slander:
He doeth no evil to his friend;
Nor uttereth a reproach against his neighbour.
- 4 In his eyes a vile person is contemned;
But he honoureth them that fear Jehovah.
He sweareth to his friend, and changeth not.
- 5 He putteth not out his money to usury;
Nor taketh a bribe against the innocent.
He that doeth these things shall never be moved.

5. *His money to usury.*]—The Jews were prohibited by the law from taking usury, or interest on money lent to their

brethren, but not on what was lent to strangers; that is, foreigners of other countries. Deut. xxiii. 20. The manifest

PSALM XVI.

THE Apostle Peter has established the title of this Psalm by ascribing it to David. Acts ii. 25. The same authority, with which that of the Apostle Paul concurs, Acts xiii. 35, assures us that the latter part of the Psalm relates, not to David himself, but is prophetic of the resurrection of Christ, that immortal Redeemer and King, who was to descend from him: these testimonies are so express, as to make it not a little surprising, that christian commentators should have applied the Psalm to David; since we must abandon all dependence upon the apostles, as inspired interpreters of the Old Testament, if we depart from their decision in a case where it is so unequivocally expressed. We are, therefore, constrained to apply the latter part of the Psalm to no other person than to the divine Saviour; and as the construction of the whole evidently negatives the application of any part of it but to one and the same person, we have no alternative but to receive it altogether as a direct prediction of the Messiah. It is delivered in his person, and is descriptive of his inviolable faith and hope in God during the period of his humiliation upon earth, when the prospect of his sufferings, and death, and of the glorious consequences of these events, was continually before him. The language in which the Psalm is composed is such as every Christian, while he refers it in its fullest extent to the adorable Saviour, may humbly appropriate to himself, in his measure, and thus render it an incentive to many a joyful song of praise, as he passes through the diversified and often painful changes of this mortal and sinful state, to that "fulness of joy" to which the triumphant Redeemer has ascended; and to which he will not fail to conduct even the feeblest of his disciples whose faith reposes upon him.

MICHTAM (A TERM OF VERY DOUBTFUL MEANING, EXPRESSIVE OF SOME UNASSIGNABLE PECULIARITY OF THE COMPOSITION,) OF DAVID.

- 1 PRESERVE me, O God! for in thee do I put my trust.
- 2 I have said to Jehovah, Thou art my Lord:
My welfare cometh only from thee.
- 3 In the saints that are upon the earth,
Even in the excellent, is all my delight.
- 4 They multiply their sorrows who hastily turn backward:

design of this prohibition was to promote humane and fraternal sentiments in the bosoms of the Israelites towards each other. A more remote end seems also to have been aimed at, viz. to check the formation of a commercial character among the Jews, and to confine them as much as possible to those agricultural and private pursuits, which would seclude them from

intercourse with the surrounding nations, as it was not very likely that a practice of this nature would be extended much among foreigners which was prohibited at home.

PSALM XVI.

4. *They multiply their sorrows, &c.*—Both the translation and the sense of this verse are exceedingly controverted. The

- Their libations of blood will I not offer ;
 Nor will I take their names upon my lips.
 5 Jehovah is the portion of my inheritance, and of my cup :
 Thou maintainest my lot.
 6 The lines have fallen unto me in pleasant places ;
 Yea, I have a goodly heritage.
 7 I will bless Jehovah, who giveth me counsel :
 My reins also instruct me in the night seasons.
 8 I set Jehovah always before me :
 Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
 9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoiceth ;
 My flesh also shall rest in hope :
 10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades ;
 Neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.
 11 Thou wilt shew me the path of life :
 In thy presence there is fulness of joy ;
 At thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.

PSALM XVII.

THE tenor of this Psalm leads to a conclusion that it was composed during some one of the many seasons of anxiety and danger to which David was subjected by the restless and implacable enmity of Saul and his adherents. In most pathetic language the Psalmist implores the divine interference between himself and his adversaries. He asserts, with great energy, the

version which is here given is as literal as it can be, without any forced construction being put upon the words. The sense in which the passage is to be taken may be thus stated: The speaker having declared the delight that he takes in holy and excellent men, proceeds to say, that those persons who rashly and precipitately turn away from him, and from the truth which he proclaimed, augment their own sufferings: and he affirms that he will hold no association with them, either in their religious services, which were polluted and detestable, or in the intercourse of friendship, by making mention of their names.

6. *The lines, &c.*]—A figurative expression, taken from the custom of measuring and allotting lands by cords or measuring-lines.

7. *My reins also, &c.*]—The reins, or kidneys, are used to signify the interior faculties; and the divine Speaker observes, that in seasons of solitude, his thoughts were instructively employed in contemplating the heavenly discoveries that were communicated to him. "Whatever I speak, therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." John xii. 50.

rectitude of which he was conscious, and his entire innocence of the crimes of which his enemies were guilty. He portrays in very lively and expressive images the characters of these men, whom he represents as oppressive and cruel in the highest degree, and altogether abandoned to sensual and worldly dispositions, which rendered them equally regardless of the authority of God, and the obligations of justice and humanity. He concludes by expressing his confidence that God will finally vindicate his cause, and make him joyful, by the triumphant issue of his mournful and distressing state.

A PRAYER OF DAVID.

- 1 HEAR the right, O Jehovah ! attend unto my cry :
Give ear unto my prayer from lips without deceit.
- 2 Let the determination of my cause come forth from thy presence :
Let thy eyes behold the things that are upright.
- 3 Thou searchest my heart, thou visitest me in the night,
Thou examinest me, thou findest no evil in me :
My mouth doth not transgress.
- 4 As for the works of men, by the word of thy lips
I have shunned the paths of the oppressor.
- 5 Hold up my goings in thy paths,
That my footsteps may not slip.
- 6 I call upon thee, for thou, O God ! wilt answer me :
Incline thy ear to me, and hear my speech.
- 7 Shew thy marvellous loving-kindness,
O thou ! that savest by thy right hand
Them that trust in thee, from those who rise up against them.
- 8 Keep me as the pupil of the eye ;
Hide me under the shadow of thy wings,
- 9 From the wicked that oppress me,—
My deadly enemies, that compass me about.
- 10 They are enclosed in their own fat :
With their mouth they speak proudly.

1. *Hear the right.*]—David here appeals to God, as an impartial judge, who was fully acquainted with his character and actions: the strict integrity of which he firmly asserts, and entreats that a decision may be given in his favour. These vehement assertions are not to be understood

as though he claimed a character absolutely sinless, which rested its hopes of divine favour on this ground, as a matter of right; but they are to be limited to the case in point, which was the Psalmist's innocence with respect to Saul, against whom he had neither done nor intended any evil.

- 11 Now are they surrounding our path ;
 They are setting their eyes, declining to the earth,
 12 Like a lion greedy of his prey,
 Even as a young lion, lurking in secret places.
 13 Arise, O Jehovah ! disappoint him, cast him down ;
 Deliver my soul from the wicked, who are thy sword :
 14 From men who are thy hand, O Jehovah !
 From men of the world, whose portion is with the prosperous ;
 Whose belly thou fillest with thy treasures :
 They abound in children, and lay up their superabundance for
 their offspring.
 15 As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness :
 I shall be satisfied when thy glory awaketh.

PSALM XVIII.

THE account which is given in the title of this magnificent song of praise very satisfactorily states the purpose for which it was composed. David's enemies, both foreign and domestic, had been entirely subdued by the special interference of God, who thus fulfilled the promises which he had made, and established the public welfare of his people, and the prosperous reign of the prince whom he had chosen. In celebrating these signal instances of divine faithfulness and goodness, the inspired Psalmist soars to the loftiest regions of poetic sublimity. By a series of the boldest figures, he depicts the Most High as being incensed at the conduct of his adversaries ; rising up with inflamed indignation to avenge his cause, and appearing in such awful majesty as to agitate the heavens with tremendous storms, and to convulse the earth to its base with terrific concussions. He imparts effect and grandeur to his sublime effusions, by images drawn from the fearful catastrophe of the deluge, when "all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened ;" and from the magnificent descent upon Sinai, when "the mount was altogether on a smoke, because Jehovah descended upon it in

13. *From the wicked, who are thy sword.*]—It may be questioned whether David, in this and the next clause, intended to represent wicked men as the sword and hand of God, that is, the instruments which he employed to correct his servants ; or whether his meaning was to pray that God would interpose his own

hand and sword to defend him, and punish his enemies. The latter sense is adopted by some interpreters ; but as the former is a perfectly scriptural sentiment, and requires the supposition of no ellipsis, it appears to me to be most likely what is intended. *Vide* Isa. x. 5.

15. *As for me, &c.*]—*Vide* Addit. Notes.

fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace; and the whole mount quaked greatly."

These were images familiar to every Israelitish bosom, which would excite in them reverence and admiration; while they traced in this scenery the majesty and glory of the God of Israel. We, who now peruse this ode, can very imperfectly conceive the effect which was produced by it, when chanted forth with all the melody and pomp of music by the myriads who were assembled on this transcendent occasion. Christian prophecy alone discloses a scene surpassing this; a scene to which it was in some degree introductory, and of which it may justly be regarded as a significant type. Rev. vii. 9—17; "After this I beheld, and lo! a great multitude which no man could number," &c.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. A PSALM OF DAVID, THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH; WHO SPAKE UNTO JEHOVAH THE WORDS OF THIS SONG IN THE DAY THAT JEHOVAH DELIVERED HIM FROM THE HAND OF ALL HIS ENEMIES, AND FROM THE HAND OF SAUL: THEN HE SAID,

- 1 I WILL love thee, O Jehovah! my strength.
- 2 Jehovah is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer,
My God, my stronghold, in which I take refuge:
My shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower.
- 3 I called upon Jehovah, who is worthy to be praised;
And I was saved from my enemies.
- 4 The bonds of death encompassed me,
And the floods of Belial made me afraid.
- 5 The bonds of Hades encompassed me,
The snares of death were before me.
- 6 In my distress I called upon Jehovah;
And to my God-I cried out:

2. *The horn of my salvation.*—This is a figure drawn from animals, which are furnished with horns, both for defence and offence. We have the same figure in several other places in Scripture; and it is scarcely necessary to observe, that nothing more is intended by it, than that God employs his mighty power to protect his servants, and to subdue their and his adversaries.

4. *The bonds of death.*—Death is here personified, under the semblance of a mighty conqueror, who binds his vanquished foes in strong fetters.

4. *The floods of Belial.*—Belial is a compound term, significant of vileness and worthlessness. The "floods of Belial" intend large bodies of men, who rush forward, like impetuous torrents, to overwhelm and destroy whatever opposes them.

5. *The bonds of Hades.*—Hades, or the receptacle of the dead, is here personified, as death is in the fourth verse, and in the following clause. "The snares of Death" are the instruments of capture, employed by this remorseless victor.

- He heard my voice from his temple ;
 And my cry came before him, into his ears. -
- 7 Then the earth shook and trembled ;
 The foundations of the mountains were agitated ;
 They trembled exceedingly, because he was wroth.
- 8 A smoke ascended from his nostrils,
 And fire from his mouth devoured ;
 Coals were kindled by it.
- 9 He bowed the heavens, and came down ;
 And darkness was under his feet.
- 10 He rode also upon a cherub, and did fly,
 Yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind.
- 11 He made darkness his retreat ;
 His pavilion round about him
 Was dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies.
- 12 At the brightness that was before him
 His thick clouds were dispersed :
 There was hail-storm, and coals of fire.
- 13 Jehovah thundered in the heavens ;
 The High One sent forth his voice :
 There was hail-storm, and coals of fire.
- 14 Then he sent out his arrows, and scattered them ;
 He shot forth his lightnings, and discomfited them.
- 15 Then the sources of the waters were seen ;
 And the foundations of the world were disclosed,
 At thy rebuke, O Jehovah !
 At the vehement blast of thy nostrils.

15. *At the vehement blast of thy nostrils.*] — This is a remarkable instance of the daring genius of Eastern poetry. In the magnificent description given of the war-horse, Job xxxix. 2, it is said, "the glory of his nostrils is terrible." That is, when he is excited by the sounds of battle, he emits copious streams of vapour from his nostrils, indicative of the energy, strength, and spirit by which he is animated. So also, in Job xl. 18—20, it is stated of the Leviathan, "out of his mouth go burning

lamps, and sparks of fire leap out. Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething-pot or cauldron. His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth." These are instances of bold hyperbole: but when images of this nature are employed to describe the energies of divine Omnipotence, Oriental poetry puts forth its utmost strength, and leaves far behind the feebler conceptions, and less daring flights, of Western imagination and fancy.

- 16 He stretched out his hand from on high ;
 He took me, he drew me from the many waters.
- 17 He delivered me from my strong enemy,
 And from them that hated me ; for they were too strong for me.
- 18 They set their faces against me, in the day of my calamity ;
 But Jehovah became my support.
- 19 He brought me forth also into a large place ;
 He delivered me, because he delighted in me.
- 20 Jehovah rewarded me according to my righteousness ;
 According to the cleanness of my hands, he recompensed me.
- 21 For I kept the ways of Jehovah,
 And departed not wickedly from my God :
- 22 Because all his precepts were before me,
 Nor did I put away his statutes from me.
- 23 I was also upright in his sight ;
 And I kept myself from my iniquity.
- 24 Therefore, Jehovah hath recompensed me according to my
 righteousness,
 According to the cleanness of my hands in his sight.
- 25 With a merciful man, thou shewest thyself merciful ;
 With an upright man, thou shewest thyself upright ;
- 26 With a pure man, thou shewest thyself pure ;
 And with a perverse man, thou shewest thyself perverse.
- 27 For thou savest an afflicted people ;
 But thou bringest down high looks.
- 28 Surely thou lightest my lamp ;
 Jehovah my God enlighteneth my darkness.
- 29 For by thee I have demolished a troop :
 And by my God have I leaped over strong walls.

20. *Jehovah rewarded me according to my righteousness.*—*Vide* Note on Psalm xvii. 1.

26. *Thou shewest thyself perverse.*—In the several expressions that precede this, the general character of divine distributions is intimated, which assign to men consequences corresponding with their dispositions and conduct : in this case the same notion prevails ; but we must be careful

to avoid a supposition that the divine conduct ever partakes really of the character of perverseness. A perverse man is a source of annoyance and vexation to his associates ; and God, in his righteous distribution, will treat him as he treats others, by bringing trouble and anguish upon him. "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Matt. vii. 2.

- 30 As for God, his way is perfect :
The word of Jehovah is tried :
He is a shield to all those who trust in him.
- 31 For who is a God, besides Jehovah ?
Or who is a rock, besides our God ?
- 32 God girdeth me with strength,
And maketh my way prosperous.
- 33 He maketh my feet like hinds' feet,
And setteth me upon my high places.
- 34 He teacheth my hands to war,
So that a bow of brass is drawn by my arm.
- 35 Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation ;
And thy right hand hath holden me up :
Thy elemency hath made me great.
- 36 Thou hast enlarged my steps under me,
So that my feet have not slipped.
- 37 I pursued my enemies, and overtook them ;
Neither did I turn again, till they were consumed.
- 38 I wounded them, so that they were not able to rise :
They have fallen under my feet.
- 39 For thou hast girded me with strength unto battle ;
Thou hast laid my enemies prostrate under me.
- 40 Thou hast also given me the necks of my enemies,
That I might destroy them that hate me.
- 41 They cried out, but there was no deliverer ;
Unto Jehovah, but he answered them not.
- 42 Then did I beat them small as dust before the wind ;
As the mire of the streets, I crushed them to atoms.
- 43 Thou hast delivered me from the contentions of the people :
Thou hast set me at the head of the nations.
A people which I knew not are in subjection to me.
- 44 As soon as they hear, they obey me :
The sons of the stranger are submissive to me.
- 45 The sons of the stranger lose their strength ;
Through alarm they quit their strongholds.
- 46 Jehovah liveth, and blessed be my rock :
And let the God of my salvation be exalted !

- 4 Their sound goeth forth through all the earth,
And their words to the end of the world.
In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,
- 5 Which resembleth a bridegroom coming out of his chamber :
He rejoiceth, as a strong man to run a race.
- 6 His going forth is from the end of the heavens :
His circuit also is to the end of them ;
And there is nothing hidden from the heat thereof.
- 7 The law of Jehovah is perfect, reviving the spirit :
The testimonies of Jehovah are sure, making wise the simple.
- 8 The statutes of Jehovah are right, making the heart rejoice :
The commandments of Jehovah are pure, enlightening the eyes.
- 9 The fear of Jehovah is clean, enduring for ever :
The appointments of Jehovah are true, they are righteous altogether.
- 10 More to be desired than gold, even much fine gold :
Sweeter also than honey, or the droppings of the combs.
- 11 By them also is thy servant warned ;
In keeping of them there is great reward.

that there is no real, audible voice uttered by the heavens ; and that the appeal which they make is not to the senses, but to the reason and intelligence of men who behold them.

" What though no real voice or sound
" Amid the radiant orbs be found ;
" In reason's ear they all rejoice,
" And utter forth a glorious voice ;
" For ever singing as they shine,
" The hand that made us is divine."

ADDISON.

The English translators seem to have followed the Septuagint and the Vulgate, and have inserted words that are not in the Hebrew text.

7. *The law of Jehovah.*—The Psalmist having adverted to the knowledge of God which the heavens disclose, now turns to a more direct, universal, and clearly intelligible discovery of God's nature and will, made by his revealed law : the sanc-

tity and perfection of which he brings into view, by an induction of its various excellences.

7. *Reviving the spirit.* Vulg. Trans. *Converting the soul.*—This version conveys a sense good and true in itself, but is not in accordance with the design of the Psalmist, which is to express the effects of the divine law on the feelings and affections of good men. The Hebrew terms properly mean, "bringing back the spirit," when it is depressed by adversity, by refreshing and consoling it: like food, it restores the faint, and communicates vigour to the disconsolate.

9. *The fear of Jehovah.*—By a metonymy, "fear" is put for the law, which prescribes fear. There is no material diversity between the application of the several words, testimonies, statutes, &c. to the law ; but they are intended to express the various topics of which the law is comprehensive.

- 47 Even the God who worketh vengeance for me,
And subdueth the peoples under me.
- 48 Thou deliverest me from my enemies ;
Yea, thou liftest me above those that rise up against me.
From the man of violence thou hast delivered me.
- 49 Therefore will I praise thee, O Jehovah ! among the nations :
And to thy name will I sing praises.
- 50 He worketh great deliverance for his king,
And sheweth mercy to his anointed ;
To David, and to his seed, for evermore.

PSALM XIX.

Nothing is known relative to the time when this Psalm was written, or the occasion which prompted the composition of it. There is, however, nothing contained in it which renders an acquaintance with these particulars necessary to the understanding of its meaning. It consists of two parts : the first, from ver. 1 to ver. 6, celebrates the divine glory in the creation and conservation of the heavenly bodies ; and the second, from ver. 7 to the end, illustrates the excellency of the divine law. The latter part is terminated by lowly expressions of conscious frailty and imperfection ; and of earnest desire that preventing grace might be imparted, and condescending acceptance of the Psalmist's devout contemplation and prayers.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN, A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 THE heavens declare the glory of God,
And the firmament sheweth the work of his hands.
- 2 Day unto day uttereth speech ;
And night unto night sheweth knowledgc.
- 3 There is no speech nor words :
Their voice is not heard.

2. *Day unto day.*]—Each day and night proclaims the wonders of creation, and declares them to that which follows, in unbroken and perpetual succession.

3. *There is no speech, &c.* Literally, *No speech and no words : their voice not heard.*]—In verses 1 and 2 the poet, by a

strong, though very intelligible figure, ascribes voice and language to the heavens, which, by their beauty, grandeur, and unchangeable order, bear testimony to the power, wisdom, and goodness that formed them. Yet, to indicate that he speaks figuratively, he here observes,

12 Who can discern his errors ?

Cleanse thou me from secret faults.

13 Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins ;

Let them not have dominion over me ; [gression.

Then shall I be upright, and I shall be free from great trans-

14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart,

Be acceptable in thy sight, O Jehovah ! my Rock and my Redeemer.

PSALM XX.

VARIOUS efforts have been made to determine, from the contents of this Psalm, to what precise events it is to be referred. There is, however, nothing of this kind in it from which any thing certain can be concluded : but we may clearly deduce from the language which is employed, that it formed a public intercession, to be offered by the people of Israel, on behalf of David. It appears to have been delivered to them, to have been composed for their use, and to have been uttered in their person. Some expositors conjecture that it was especially appropriated to those seasons when David was setting out, at the head of his armies, to contend against the enemies of his country. This conjecture has some plausibility, but cannot be regarded as by any means certain. David himself was the author of the Psalm ; and while he was desirous that his people should intercede for him, and for the public prosperity, he puts into their lips sentiments of the purest piety, and expressions of the highest trust and confidence in God, as the only real source of all public and private good. The people were, by this means, instructed in the most important principles of religion, and urged to combine with their feelings of loyalty towards their king the higher sentiments of faith and obedience towards God. How great would be the happiness of nations, if all princes resembled David in this part of his conduct ! and how truly elevated, if their loyalty and patriotism were based on faith and submission to him who is " the Prince of the kings of the earth ! " May this be the honour and happiness of Great Britain and her princes !

12. *Who can discern his errors ?*] — *sc.* The mistakes which result from infirmity and frailty ; and are not seldom unobserved, even by the most vigilant inspection.

13. *Presumptuous sins.*] — These are wilful transgressions, prompted by pride, or other unholy affections ; and which, when indulged and repeated, lead to a commission of the greatest crimes. The

Psalmist implores deliverance from these, that he may enjoy the consciousness of integrity, and may not incur accumulated guilt, here denoted by " great transgression." It may be remarked, that the insertion of the definite article " the " is not authorized by the original, and leads to a supposition which is incorrect, that some definite crime, such as the " sin against the Holy Ghost," is intended.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 MAY Jehovah answer thee in the day of trouble !
May the name of the God of Jacob exalt thee !
- 2 May he send thee help from the sanctuary,
And from Zion sustain thee !
- 3 May he remember all thy offerings,
And accept thy burnt-sacrifices ! SELAH.
- 4 May he grant thee according to thy heart,
And fulfil all thy counsel !
- 5 We will rejoice in thy safety,
And in the name of our God will we set up our banners.
May Jehovah fulfil all thy petitions !
- 6 Now I know that Jehovah saveth his anointed ;
He answereth him from his holy heaven,
By the saving strength of his right hand.
- 7 Some make mention of chariots, and some of horses ;
But we will make mention of the name of our God.
- 8 They are brought down, and fall ;
But we arise, and are erect.
- 9 O Jehovah ! save the king :
Answer us in the day when we call.

6. *Now I know.*]—The Psalm was evidently used in public services of devotion ; and the former parts of it seem to have been sung by the whole assembly together. Here there is a pause of the general singing ; and this verse was probably recited by a smaller number, or perhaps by a single individual, who thus expressed the universal confidence of the congregation, grounded on God's past goodness, that he would listen to the supplications which were now offered to him on behalf of their king. When this verse was thus concluded, the whole assembly again united to sing the remaining part.

7. *Some make mention of chariots, &c.*]—It is clear from these words, taken in connexion with — “ will we set up our banners,” in ver. 5, that the Psalm had

some relation to military undertakings. The people are here represented as declaring, that while their adversaries gloried in the number and sufficiency of their war-chariots and horses, they would glory alone in the help and protection of Jehovah, and would make mention of no other ground of hope.

9. *O Jehovah ! save the king.*]—The common translation reads this passage in a way that gives no determinate or intelligible meaning : “ Save, Lord, let the King hear us when we call.” This agrees with the masoretical punctuation ; but the Septuagint follows a different pointing, and reads, *Κυrie σωσον τον βασιλεα*, in which the Vulgate concurs. Taken in this manner, the verse is perfectly clear in meaning, and entirely agreeable to the whole subject of the Psalm.

PSALM XXI.

It is scarcely possible to peruse this divine ode attentively, without a strong sentiment of its being applicable to a more glorious and righteous King than David. Some of the expressions, indeed, that are contained in it, might without force be applied to David, but very great force must be put upon it to interpret the whole in this way. I do not, therefore, feel any hesitation in stating my full agreement with those expositors, both ancient and modern, Jewish and Christian, who look upon the Psalm as altogether appropriate to the Messiah, and intended to predict the triumphant establishment of his kingdom. The argument is similar to that of the second Psalm; nor is there any reason to interpret that to this effect, which is not equally applicable to the one now before us. In vv. 1, 7, the Chaldee substitutes for "king," "the King Messiah;" and Jarchi observes, that "our masters explain this Psalm of the King Messiah; but on account of the Christians, who make an improper use of it, it is better to apply it to David."—*Rosenm.* in loc.

The Psalm commences with an admiring exclamation of the joy which the divine Redeemer and King derived from the favour and blessings of the Most High which were conferred upon him. It proceeds to express the confidence which he felt in the protection and patronage of God; and goes on to predict the final overthrow of all the enemies of his kingdom, and the complete and everlasting establishment of his reign. It concludes with an ascription of glory to Jehovah, and the expression of a fixed purpose to praise and celebrate the greatness of his might. We may understand the whole as being delivered in the person of David, and designed to be adopted by the whole church, in every succeeding age. May our hearts be in devout and grateful unison with it!

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 THE king will rejoice in thy strength, O Jehovah !
In thy salvation also, how greatly will he exult !
- 2 The desire of his heart thou grantest to him :
And the request of his lips thou withholdest not from him.
- 3 For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness :
Thou settest a crown of pure gold upon his head.
- 4 Life he asked from thee, and thou gavest it him ;
Length of days, for ever and ever.
- 5 His glory is great in thy salvation :
Honour and majesty hast thou conferred upon him.
- 6 For thou hast made him a blessing for ever :
Thou hast made him glad with the joy of thy presence.

- 7 For the king trusteth in Jehovah;
And through the mercy of the High God, he shall not be moved.
- 8 Thy hand shall find out all thy enemies:
Thy right hand shall find out all them that hate thee.
- 9 Thou wilt make them like a furnace of fire, when thou art angry:
Jehovah will swallow them up in his wrath;
And the fire will devour them.
- 10 Their fruit wilt thou destroy from the earth,
And their seed from the children of men.
- 11 For they intended evil against thee:
They devised a stratagem, which they cannot effect.
- 12 Therefore thou wilt make them a mark,
When thou preparest thy bow-strings against them.
- 13 Be thou exalted, O Jehovah! in thy strength:
We will sing, and celebrate thy might.

PSALM XXII.

A CAREFUL and repeated review of this Psalm convinces me that it has no relation to David himself, though it appears to have been composed by him; but is to be considered as a direct and most graphical pre-representation of the sufferings of the divine Redeemer; which is concluded by a very lively, though highly figurative description, of the blessed consequences that are intended to succeed them. The entire composition is, indeed, replete with most affecting imagery, the force of which will be more easily felt than it can be explained. It is put into the mouth of our blessed Saviour, and represented as flowing from his lips during the agonies of his crucifixion; and may justly be looked upon as an instance of those impassioned exercises of devotion to which the apostle, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, refers when he says, "Who in the days

8. *Thy hand shall find out, &c.*—The Psalmist here makes a direct address to the Saviour-King, and foretels the fearful consequences which will fall on all those who oppose his reign, and refuse to submit to his divine authority. These guilty and wretched persons are the objects of God's severest displeasure and hottest indignation; and his glory, the glory of his righteousness and power, will be dis-

played in their utter and hopeless destruction. "While then it is called 'to-day,' let none of us be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin;" for "if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."

of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered: and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." Heb. v. 7—9. Excruciating, however, as were the agonies of our Lord's last hours, and deeply as they pierced his heart, he is here held forth as being supported by the prospect of the recompense that was in his view: "for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Heb. xii. 2. The joy that is here spoken of is represented in this Psalm under the similitude of a feast, of which all nations, the rich and the poor, without exception, shall partake; and from which even the most wretched, the dying, "who cannot keep himself alive," shall not be excluded; and from the whole of which the highest glory shall redound to God and to his Christ. The same figure is used to depict the same events by the prophet Isaiah; "In this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces." Isa. xxv. 6—8.

For some observations in support of the view that is here given, I shall beg to refer the reader to Additional Notes.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. ON AJIJEETH SHAHAR. A PSALM OF DAVID.

1 My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me? [cry?
Why art thou so far from my help, and from the words of my loud

1. *Why hast thou forsaken me?*] — There is no sufficient reason to suppose that during our Lord's sufferings, even the extremest of them, his trust in God, and his confidence in the hope of complete deliverance, ever failed. He was, according to the representation here given, now surrounded by an accumulation of sorrows, which pierced his soul, and wrung his heart with unutterable anguish: every appearance was as if God had forsaken him, and given him up into the hands of his inveterate enemies, and had abandoned him to the powers of darkness. But this never for an instant took place; nor is it to be thought that our Lord ever looked on himself as being in this hopeless case. The hold which he retained upon his almighty Father is

plainly indicated by the mournful cry which he poured forth, — My God! my God! Still he felt to the uttermost the horrors of his condition; and as he had before said "Take this cup from me," so now his pure and most susceptible nature shrank from the agonies which he was enduring, and which he would have avoided but for the deep submission which he invariably exercised towards his Father, and that perfect self-denial, by which he entirely gave himself up to his will. Some expositors are of opinion that this part of the Psalm is not applicable to Christ, nor in agreement with his all-perfect character; they therefore apply it to David. It might have been supposed that the fact of Christ's adopting the very words of the first verse, must have been sufficient to

- 2 O my God ! I call by day, but thou answerest not ;
 By night also, I am not silent.
- 3 Yet thou, O Holy One ! inhabitest the praises of Israel.
- 4 In thee our fathers trusted :
 They trusted, and thou didst deliver them.
- 5 They cried unto thee, and they were rescued :
 They trusted in thee, and they were not confounded.
- 6 But I am a worm, and no man :
 A reproach of men, and despised by the people.
- 7 All that behold me laugh me to scorn ;
 They thrust out the lip, they shake the head :
- 8 " He relied on Jehovah, that he would deliver him ;
 " Let him deliver him, for he delighteth in him."
- 9 Yet thou didst bring me forth from the womb :
 Thou causedst me to hope, when on my mother's breast.
- 10 I was cast upon thee from the womb :
 From my birth thou hast been my God.
- 11 Be not far from me, for trouble is near ;
 For I have no helper.

countervail such an opinion. But there seems to prevail in the minds of many who undertake to expound the Scriptures, an inexplicable objection against allowing the Apostles of Christ, or Christ himself, to be the best guides in the interpretation of the Old Testament.

3. *Inhabitest the praises of Israel.*—This language is taken from the usages of the ancient Jewish Church, during its purest character, when Jehovah, in his pavilion upon Mount Zion, was, day and night, without ceasing, surrounded by the praises which were there offered to him. In reference to this practice, the divine speaker here declares, that though God seemed to have forsaken him, and to have given up his church into the hands of inexorable foes, that this was really far from being the case; for that God was still as mindful of his servants as he had ever been, though, in order to accomplish the mysterious purposes of his most holy

will, a cloud of impenetrable darkness was now spread over his procedure.

6. *But I am a worm, &c.*—This most expressive figure indicates the deep sense of suffering which evidently accompanied our Redeemer during the greater part of his public life upon earth. He was incessantly subjected to "the contradictions of sinners," and reduced to the lowest state of humiliation. He appeared "as a root out of a dry ground;" there was in him "no form nor comeliness," nor any beauty that could attract desire.

7. *Laugh me to scorn.*—See Matt. xxvii. 39: "They that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads."

9. *Yet thou didst bring me forth from the womb.*—The blessed Jesus here indicates the supernatural events that accompanied his entrance into the world, and urges them as a reason why he should not now be forsaken.

- 12 Many bulls encompass me ;
 Strong bulls of Bashan beset me around :
 13 They gape upon me with their mouths,
 Like a ravening and a roaring lion.
 14 I am poured forth like water,
 And all my bones are sundred :
 My heart, like wax, is dissolved within me.
 15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd :
 My tongue also cleaveth to my jaws :
 And to the dust of death thou bringest me down.
 16 For dogs compass me round ;
 The assembly of the wicked enclose me :
 They wound my hands and my feet.
 17 I may number all my bones :
 They look and stare upon me.
 18 They part my garments among them ;
 And upon my vesture they cast the lot.
 19 But thou, O Jehovah ! be not far from me :
 Hasten to help me, O thou ! my Strength.
 20 Deliver my life from the sword ;
 My only one from the power of the dog.

12. *Strong bulls of Bashan.*—Bashan was a district on the east of the Jordan, celebrated for its rich pastures, and cattle of extraordinary size and quality. The divine speaker compares his enemies, in size and strength, to bulls bred in these pastures: he then augments the force of the similitude by comparing them to fierce and roaring lions.

14. *I am poured forth like water.*—As water when poured on the earth is immediately dissipated, and cannot again be collected, so my life and vital powers are dissipated. So 2 Sam. xiv. 14; "We are as water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again." The speaker then goes on to accumulate figures of deep distress: "My heart, like wax, is dissolved; as wax is melted by fire, so my heart is consumed by the intolerable anguish which I suffer. My strength is dried up like a potsherd."

He here compares himself to an earthen vessel, the moisture of which is entirely expelled and consumed by the heat of the furnace to which it is exposed.

16. *Dogs.*—Michaelis thinks that this expression debases the style, and that it is a descent from the nobler beasts, lions, to a contemptible species of animals. He therefore attempts to improve the passage by an alteration of the punctuation. There is little reason for this criticism, if we remember that dogs of great strength, very fierce and formidable animals, were employed in the defence of flocks and herds, and in hunting the most savage beasts of prey.

— *They wound my hands, &c.*—*Vide* Additional Notes.

20. *Deliver my life from the sword.*—It may seem from these words, that our Saviour is represented as if he were desirous of being rescued from death; and in

- 21 Save me from the mouth of the lion ;
And from the horns of savage monsters, answer me.
- 22 I will declare thy name to my brethren :
In the midst of the assembly will I praise thee.
- 23 Ye that fear Jehovah, praise him :
Glorify him, all ye seed of Jacob ;
And fear him, all ye seed of Israel.
- 24 For he doth not despise, nor abhor the affliction of the afflicted :
He hideth not his face from him ;
But when he crieth to him, he heareth.
- 25 My praise shall be of thee, in the great assembly :
I will pay my vows, in the presence of them that fear him.
- 26 The poor shall feed, and shall be satisfied :
They that seek Jehovah shall praise him :
Your heart shall be revived for ever.
- 27 All the ends of the earth shall mention this, and turn to Jehovah :
And all the families of the nations shall prostrate themselves
before thee.

this they agree with the words which he uttered, " Father, save me from this hour." The passage in Hebrews v. 7, to which I have before made a reference, represents him as praying to be delivered from death; and adds, " that he was heard." This cannot, however, mean that he did not actually undergo the death of the body; and must, therefore, be taken to mean, that he was not left in the power of death, from which he was speedily delivered by his resurrection, when he triumphed over death, and disarmed him of his sting.

22. *I will declare thy name, &c.*—The style here changes from that of the most pungent grief, to that of the highest joy and gratitude, prompted by the certainty which the Redeemer felt that his agonies would be productive of the greatest delight to himself, of eternal and inexpressible benefits to his true disciples, and of the most perfect honour and glory to

God. He therefore adds soon after, " I will pay my vows," &c., meaning, that he will render thanksgiving and praises, in the presence of his universal church, to God as the sole author of blessings so vast and unspeakable.

26. *The poor shall feed, &c.*—What follows is, as has been intimated in the introductory observations, a representation of the immense and eternal benefits of Christ's redemption, under the similitude of a feast, to which " all nations, kindreds, and tongues," expressed here generally by the rich and the poor, shall have unlimited access.

27. *Shall mention this, &c.*—They will regard the death of the Messiah as the most memorable theme of their converse; and such will be the effect of it upon their hearts, that they will turn from idolatry, impiety, and disobedience, to the sincere and spiritual worship of " the only true God and of Jesus Christ his Son."

- 28 For the kingdom is Jehovah's;
And he is governor among the nations.
- 29 All the opulent of the earth shall feed, and adore him :
Before him shall bow, all that are going down to the dust,
And he that is unable to keep himself alive.
- 30 A seed shall serve him ;
It shall be accounted to the Lord for an offspring.
- 31 They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness,
To a people that shall be born, that he hath done it.

PSALM XXIII.

THIS Psalm was written by David at some period of his life when he was happily at rest from the numerous troubles to which he was often exposed. We may form this conclusion from the calmness and serenity which pervade the whole composition ; and from the images of peaceful life which he employs to illustrate the happiness which he was enjoying, and to the continuance of which he was directing his hopes. Like a man of enlightened and fervent piety, he traces all his pleasures to the care and favour of God, whom he contemplates under the character of a kind and faithful shepherd. No account more definite can be given of the time when the Psalm was written, or of the circumstances that gave occasion to it.

A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 JEHOVAH is my shepherd : I shall not want.
- 2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures ;
He leadeth me beside peaceful waters.

29. *Before him shall bow, &c.*—The common version of this passage is singularly incoherent and obscure ; so much so, that no consistent sense can be drawn from it. The design of the place is manifestly to state, that none, not even the most wretched of men, those who are reduced by their miseries to the lowest condition, and are sunk into the dust, unable to secure themselves from the death which their abject circumstances are bringing upon them, shall be excluded

from this rich and magnificent banquet ; but that, upon their reception of its blessings, they shall be elevated to the favour of the Most High, and put into the possession of the immortal dignities of the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.

PSALM XXIII.

1. *Jehovah is my shepherd.*—The whole of the Psalm, except the last two verses, is composed in agreement with this image, and conveys an illustration of the care and

3 He reviveth my spirit :

He leadeth me in straight paths, for his name's sake.

4 Though I walk through a gloomy valley, I will fear no evil,

For thou art with me ; thy crook and staff, they comfort me.

5 Thou spreadest my table in sight of my enemies :

Thou anointest my head with oil ; my cup runneth over.

6 Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life :

And long shall I dwell in the house of Jehovah.

fidelity with which the divine Shepherd tends his charge. A more expressive figure, or one more delightful to the feelings of piety, cannot be selected. It represents the feebleness of men, and the dangers to which, like sheep, they are liable ; and imparts consolation from the mighty power and unchanging love of the great Shepherd. Our blessed Saviour, with reference to this Psalm, speaks of himself as " the good Shepherd, who lays down his life for the sheep ; " and it would be a strange forgetfulness in his disciples not to advert to the love and care of the blessed Redeemer, on contemplating the Psalm before us ; in which, delightful as it is, there is nothing comparable to that love which induced him to become a sacrifice for the sheep of his pasture.

3. *He reviveth my spirit.*]—For the meaning of this expression, see Note on Psalm xix. 7.

—*He leadeth me in straight paths.*]—This version may perhaps prove not altogether agreeable to the feelings of the reader, in consequence of his being accustomed to a different expression in the English Bible. But the consistency of the imagery requires the alteration ; as, otherwise, we have an incongruous mixture of physical and moral figures. A careful shepherd leads his sheep to verdant pastures, conducts them near peaceful waters, affords them the means of refreshment when wearied, and guides them away from rugged and tortuous paths to such as are direct and easy.

4. *A gloomy valley.* Literally, *A valley of the shadow of death.*]—But this is a Hebraism which conveys no clear conception

in English. The words are applied to deep glens, and vales overhung by lofty and precipitous mountains, which nearly exclude the light of heaven, and produce an appearance of the deepest gloom. When timid animals, as sheep, are led through such dark recesses, where they are liable to be attacked by roaming beasts of prey, they are preserved from alarm by the presence of the shepherd, who tends them with his crook, and protects them with his staff.

5. *Thou spreadest my table, &c.*]—The Psalmist now changes the image under which he had illustrated the protection of God, to one which represents him in the character of a princely host or entertainer, who welcomes his guests to a plentiful repast, and ensures to them protection from all insidious or malevolent observers. The opulence of the host, and the splendour of the entertainment, are indicated by the rich perfume of the unguents which were used, in agreement with oriental hospitality, and the ample supply of wine which was provided. So that he acknowledges the riches of the divine bounty, which imparted, not merely the necessities, but the luxuries of life.

6. *Surely goodness, &c.*]—From the experience of the past and the present, he draws the conclusion, that the kindness and favour of God, which had been extended to him, would be perpetuated to the end of life : and on his own part, he avows his determination, with frequency and zeal, to engage himself in the worship of the house of God, as long as life should be afforded.

PSALM XXIV.

THIS Psalm was most likely written to celebrate the joyful and solemn event to which the fifteenth Psalm relates. David had prepared a suitable receptacle for the ark of Jehovah on the hill of Zion, and determined to honour the removal of that symbol of the divine presence by a grand and solemn procession. The Psalm before us probably formed a part of the sacred service that was performed on the august occasion. It consists of three parts: the first celebrates the power and majesty of Jehovah; the second describes the qualifications of those who would be acceptable visitants of so great and holy a King; and the third contains a magnificent prosopopeia, by which the poet personifies and apostrophizes the gates of the palace of Jehovah, and exhorts them to receive, with due honours, their divine Inhabitant, who was coming to take up his constant residence within them.

A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 THE earth is Jehovah's, and the fulness thereof:
The world, and they that dwell therein.
- 2 For he founded it upon the seas;
And established it upon the floods.
- 3 Who shall ascend unto the hill of Jehovah?
And who shall stand in his holy place?
- 4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;
Who lifteth not up his soul to vanity, nor sweareth deceitfully.
- 5 He shall receive blessing from Jehovah,
And bounty from the God of his salvation.
- 6 Such is the race of them that seek him:
That seek thy face, O God of Jacob!
- 7 Lift up your heads, O ye gates!
And be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors!
That the King of glory may come in.

4. *Who lifteth not up his soul to vanity.*]—To lift up the soul is to exert the desire of the heart; and the sense is, who longeth not for what is vain, sinful, and worthless.

5. *And bounty, &c.*]—The LXX. have *ελεημοσυνή* in this place; and this is agreeable to the parallelism which requires something which corresponds with blessing, in the first clause.

6. *O God of Jacob.*]—The present reading of the Hebrew text is "O Jacob;" but as this conveys scarcely any sense, it seems preferable to adopt the reading of the LXX., the Vulgate, the Syriac, and Arabic.

7. *Ye everlasting doors.*]—The poet, by a lively figure, addresses the gates of Zion, which was a very ancient and strong fortification, or citadel.

- 8 Who is this King of glory ?
 Jehovah, strong and mighty ; Jehovah, mighty in battle.
- 9 Lift up your heads, O ye gates !
 Lift them up, ye everlasting doors !
 That the King of glory may come in.
- 10 Who is this King of glory ?
 Jehovah of hosts ; he is the King of glory. SELAH.

PSALM XXV.

AT the time of composing this Psalm, the author of it, David, was evidently in a very distressed condition. Whether this distress happened in Saul's days, or was occasioned by Absalom's rebellious proceedings, or originated in some other cause, it is impossible to determine. This, however, is of the less consequence, as the contents of the Psalm are perfectly intelligible without any information respecting these topics. This sacred poem affords us a very interesting and affecting specimen of a good man struggling with great calamities, and depressed by the consciousness that he had not, in all cases, been exempt from iniquity ; yet not relinquishing his hope in God, but encouraging himself, by a contemplation of the merciful character of the Most High, which had been made manifest from the earliest times. The pious author offers the most earnest entreaties for the forgiveness of his acknowledged deficiencies ; and celebrates the goodness and condescension of God exercised towards all who seek him with lowliness of mind and sincere submission. He describes the singular favours by which good men are distinguished ; and, after a very affecting recital of the sorrows by which he was surrounded, avows his determination to commit himself and his concerns into the hands of the great object of his devout regards. The Psalm concludes with a fervent aspiration for the safety of the people of God, and for their deliverance from all evil. It thus suggests to us, that in every affliction our best resources are in God ; and that even under the pressure of our severest trials, it becomes us to feel a deep interest in all that pertains to the welfare of the church and the happiness of the servants of God.

A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 UNTO thee, O Jehovah ! do I lift up my soul.
- 2 O my God ! I trust in thee, let me not be ashamed :
 Let not my enemies triumph over me.

1. *Do I lift up my soul.*] — Vide Psalm xxiv. 4 ; Note.

- 3 Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed :
 Let them be ashamed who impiously transgress.
- 4 Shew me thy ways, O Jehovah !
 Teach me thy paths.
- 5 Lead me in thy truth, and teach me, for thou art the God of my
 salvation :
 On thee do I wait all the day. [nesses,
- 6 Remember, O Jehovah ! thy tender mercies, and thy loving kind-
 For they have been ever, of old.
- 7 Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions ;
 According to thy mercy, remember thou me, for thy goodness'
 sake, O Jehovah !
- 8 Good and upright is Jehovah :
 Therefore will he teach sinners in the way.
- 9 The meek will he guide in rightcousness,
 And he will teach the meek his way.
- 10 All the paths of Jehovah are mercy and truth,
 To such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.
- 11 For thy name's sake, O Jehovah !
 Pardon my iniquity, for it is great.
- 12 What man is he that feareth Jehovah ?
 Him will he teach in the way he should choose :
- 13 His soul shall dwell at ease,
 And his seed shall inherit the land.

3. *Who impiously transgress.* English Trans. *Who transgress without cause.*—There is something in this expression that strikes us as unfit: it seems to imply that some transgressions may have a just cause; a sense which it is impossible to accept. The Hebrew term means "vainly," *i. e.* foolishly, impiously.

11. *For it is great.*—Some interpreters take the particle which is here rendered "for," to mean "although;" as if there were in the Psalmist's mind some sort of wish to extenuate, in some measure, the greatness of his iniquity; or as if its greatness, if admitted, might be deemed a reason why it should not be forgiven,

or act as an inducement not to pray for forgiveness. But the case is far otherwise. The greatness of iniquity forms the most powerful reason why ardent entreaty for forgiveness should be offered; especially as the greatness of divine mercy is illustrated in the forgiveness of the greatest iniquity. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Rom. v. 20.

13. *Shall inherit the land.* Eng. Trans. *the earth.*—The promise made to the obedient descendants of Israel was, that their inheritance in the land of Canaan should be perpetuated to them and to their posterity.

- 14 The secret of Jehovah is with them that fear him ;
And he will make known to them his covenant.
- 15 My eyes are ever towards Jehovah ;
For he will pluck my feet out of the net.
- 16 Turn thou to me, and have mercy upon me ;
For I am desolate, and afflicted.
- 17 The troubles of my heart are enlarged ;
O, bring thou me out of my distresses.
- 18 Look upon my affliction, and my pain ;
And forgive all my sins.
- 19 Consider my enemies, for they are many ;
And they hate me with vehement hatred.
- 20 O keep my soul, and deliver me :
Let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in thee.
- 21 Let integrity and uprightness preserve me ;
For I wait on thee.
- 22 Redeem Israel, O God ! out of all his troubles.

PSALM XXVI.

THE adversaries of David, in order to justify the persecutions with which they assailed him, and to persuade the people that he was not the upright and honourable person he professed himself to be, alleged various crimes against him. Vide Psalm xxvii. 12. Charges of such a kind could not fail to produce great pain to so susceptible and generous a temper as David's evidently was ; so that it is not surprising that he should assert his innocency, as he appears to have done when suitable occasions presented themselves. The Psalm now before us appears to have originated in some such causes ; though it affords no indication of the particular events to which it relates. At this distance of time, the fact of such a Psalm as the present being written by him, furnishes the strongest evidence of his freedom from the charges that were brought against

14. *The secret of Jehovah, &c.*]—This is a figure taken from human intercourse. A friend entrusts his secrets to those in whom he confides, as a mark of his affection for them. By the "secret" here spoken of, is intended the excellency of God's commandments ; of which men,

who live in opposition to his will, are insensible and uninformed. To the same effect, by "making known to them his covenant," is meant, the sacred influence which he imparts, and by which he "opens their eyes to behold wondrous things out of his law." Psalm cxix. 18.

him; for it is a direct appeal from the judgment of men to the discriminating inspection of the all-seeing God.

Happy indeed are they who, when they are calumniated, and have their good name evil spoken of, can adopt the course that David did, by appealing to the "Searcher of hearts," for the purity of their principles and the uprightness of their conduct!

A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 JUDGE me, O Jehovah! for I have walked in my integrity;
I have also trusted in Jehovah, that I might not slide.
- 2 Examine me, O Jehovah! and prove me:
Try my reins and my heart.
- 3 For thy loving-kindness is before my eyes;
And I have walked in thy truth.
- 4 I have not sat with vain persons;
Neither will I associate with dissemblers.
- 5 I have hated the assembly of evil-doers;
And I will not sit with the wicked.
- 6 I will wash my hands in innocency,
So will I compass thy altar, O Jehovah!
- 7 That I may publish with thanksgiving,
And recount all thy wondrous works.
- 8 O Jehovah! I have loved the abode of thy house;
Even the place which is the habitation of thy glory.
- 9 Take me not away with sinners;
Nor my life with bloody men:

3. *Thy loving-kindness is before my eyes.*]—I have fixed my attention upon thy grace and favour, as the greatest and dearest objects of my pursuit.

4. *Vain persons.*]—Empty, shallow, unprincipled and wicked men.

6. *I will wash my hands in innocency.*]—The washing of the hands, in testimony of freedom from crime, was enjoined by the law. Deut. xxi. 6. To wash the hands in innocency is a figure, equivalent to the washing of innocent hands: *sc.* I will perform the prescribed rite, but with hands that stand in no need of purification.

8. *I have loved, &c.*]—The satisfaction that David derived from the public

services of the sanctuary is often adverted to by him: it is here urged as a reason why the insincerity, and other crimes which were alleged against him, could not be sustained; as it was impossible that a man who drew his choicest pleasure from the worship of the most holy God, should be pleased with any deeds of impiety. He also urges this love of divine worship as an argument why God should not involve him in the destruction which impends over the wicked, since this would be at variance with his dispensations; for he has declared that "with the pure, he will shew himself pure." Psalm xviii. 26.

- 10 In whose hands is mischief,
And their right hand is filled with bribes.
11 But as for me, I will walk in my integrity :
Rescue me, and be gracious to me.
12 My foot abideth on an even place :
In the congregations will I bless Jehovah.

PSALM XXVII.

WHEN this Psalm was written, or under what circumstances, we possess no means of ascertaining. It is clear, from the contents of it, that David had been in extreme peril, out of which he was delivered by the gracious interposition of God. He hence takes occasion to express his joy in God, and his firm hope that, through the continuance of the divine goodness, he should overcome all the opposition that was raised against him. The most distinguishing feature of this Psalm is, the strong affection for the house and worship of God which it displays. The Psalmist represents a constant access to these as being the one blessing which he desired in preference to all others; and assigns as the reason for this powerful affection, the delight which he experienced in beholding the Divine glory, and listening to the heavenly communications which were there made to pious and spiritual worshippers. After adverting again to the malevolent disturbers of his tranquillity, and to the favours which divine goodness had imparted to him, he concludes by a strenuous injunction to patient waiting upon God, as the only means of spiritual strength and consolation. Truly blessed, in every age, are they who thus derive their purest happiness from increasing acquaintance with God; and a dependence upon him, never to be shaken by the adverse occurrences of human life; resting on his infinite power and wisdom, and the favour which he extends to all those who with uprightness seek his face.

10. *Their right hand is filled with bribes.*]—The character of David's enemies and calumniators was evidently of the most atrocious kind. Their avarice was so great as to dispose them to take bribes, in order to induce them to shed innocent blood: thus forming a combination of murder, with the basest greediness of filthy lucre.

11. *Rescue me.*]—Deliver me from the false accusations of my foes, and from

the ruin which they are eager to bring upon me.

12. *On an even place.*]—This is a figurative expression, significant of the safety of which David assured himself, resulting from the protection which God extends to his true worshippers. As a man whose feet are firmly fixed upon even ground is apprehensive of no fall, so the pious worshippers of Jehovah feel no dread lest their adversaries should finally triumph over them.

A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 JEHOVAH is my light and my salvation : whom shall I fear ?
Jehovah is the strength of my life : of whom shall I be afraid ?
- 2 When wicked men, my enemies and my foes, set upon me,
To eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.
- 3 Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear;
Though war should rise against me, then will I be confident.
- 4 One thing have I desired of Jehovah ; it will I seek ;
That I may dwell in the house of Jehovah all the days of my life,
To behold the beauty of Jehovah, and to inquire in his temple.
- 5 For in the time of trouble he will hide me in his pavilion ;
In the recess of his tabernacle will he hide me ;
He will set me up upon a rock.
- 6 Even now is my head lifted up above my enemies around me ;
Therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy ;
I will sing, yea, I will sing praises to Jehovah.
- 7 Hear, O Jehovah ! with my voice I call :
Have mercy also upon me, and answer me.
- 8 Concerning thee, my heart discourses,—“ Seek ye my face : ”
Thy face, O Jehovah ! will I seek.

3. *Then will I be confident.*]—The English Bible has, “ In this will I be confident.” But, when thus taken, the sense is ambiguous, and the reader knows not to what “ this ” refers. The most probable reference is to the event which is spoken of, *i. e.* “ the rising up of man,” which is clearly represented by the term “ then.”

5. *He will set me up upon a rock.*]—All the expressions in this verse are figurative : the effect is, that God would surround him by his omnipotence, and defend him, as if he were set upon a lofty rock, far beyond the reach of his foes.

8. *Concerning thee, &c.*]—This verse is elliptical and obscure. A great diversity of opinion prevails among the critics respecting the best mode of supplying the ellipsis, and rendering the sense clear.

In the translation which is here adopted, no supplement is inserted, as this would alter the character of the passage. The Psalmist evidently speaks under the influence of strong emotion ; and, as is common in such cases, his style is concise and abrupt. In the multitude of his thoughts by which his bosom was agitated, he reflected on the numerous injunctions which God had given to direct the attention of men, when in trouble, to himself : he therefore says, “ My heart anxiously meditates on thy instructions to seek thee ; and on thy promises of help which are involved in the precept, ‘ Seek ye my face : ’ therefore I instantly, and without delay, comply with it.” Though the modes of explaining this passage disagree, they all amount to the interpretation now given.

- 9 Hide not thy face from me ; put not thy servant away in anger :
 Thou hast been my help : leave me not, neither forsake me,
 O God of my salvation !
- 10 Should my father and my mother forsake me,
 Then Jehovah will take me up.
- 11 Teach me thy way, O Jehovah !
 And lead me in a straight path, because of my enemies.
- 12 Deliver me not over to the will of my enemies :
 For false witnesses rise up against me, they breathe out violence.
- 13 I have believed that I shall behold the goodness of Jehovah,
 In the land of the living.
- 14 Wait on Jehovah ; be of good courage :
 And he will strengthen thy heart. Wait on Jehovah.

PSALM XXVIII.

No definite account can be given of the history of this Psalm. The critics, in this, as in many other instances, amuse themselves, and bewilder their readers, by conjectures built on every feeble support which seems to favour this or the other hypothesis which they think good to patronise ; but they are often far-fetched, and of the most precarious kind. It is satisfactory to know, that nothing of importance depends on our discovery of the circumstances alluded to, much less on the criticisms that have been made. The Psalm was composed, like many others, in a season of difficulty and danger ; and exhibits the portraiture of a man of fervent devotion, and of unswerving reliance upon divine aid.

10. *Should my father and my mother, &c.*—It has been concluded from these words, that David's parents abandoned him through fear of Saul's displeasure : and from this conclusion it has been inferred that the Psalm has reference to some events during his life. But this conjecture is altogether precarious, or rather there is no ground for it. The Psalmist puts the case hypothetically :—Should I be so unhappy as to be forsaken

by my nearest kindred in my afflictions, yet I shall be safe, for God will take me up, and carry me in his arms.

13. *I have believed, &c.*—The English Bible reads thus : " I had fainted unless I had believed," &c. There is a difference of reading in the Hebrew copies ; but the version which is here given makes a sense perfectly unexceptionable, without the supposition of any ellipsis whatever.

A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 To thee, O Jehovah! do I cry: my Rock! be not silent towards me:
 Lest, shouldst thou be silent towards me,
 I become like them that go down to the grave.
- 2 Hear the voice of my supplications, when I call to thee;
 When I lift up my hands towards thy holy oracle. [iniquity;
- 3 Drag me not away with the wicked, even with the workers of
 Who speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts.
- 4 Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wicked-
 ness of their endeavours:
 Give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert.
- 5 Because they regard not the works of Jehovah, nor the operation
 of his hands,
 He will demolish them, and not build them up.
- 6 Blessed be Jehovah! for he heareth the voice of my supplications.
- 7 Jehovah is my strength and my shield: my heart trusted in him,
 and I am helped: [him.
- Therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth, and in my song will I praise
- 8 Jehovah is the strength of his people:
 He is the saving strength of his anointed.
- 9 Save thy people, and bless thy inheritance:
 Feed them also, and lift them up for ever.

2. *Towards thy holy oracle.*—To lift up the hands in prayer is a solemn gesture, almost universally practised by the ancients, both Jews and heathens. By the oracle here mentioned is probably intended that part of the sanctuary whence responses were given.

4. *Give them according to their deeds.*—*Vide Appendix, No. I.*

8. *Jehovah is the strength of his people.*—The English Bible has, "The Lord is their strength." But there is no antecedent to which "their" may be referred.

Rosenm. contends, with some probability, that it is a Hebrew idiom to employ a pronoun in this manner, with reference to what follows, as in ver. 9; he therefore takes "thy people" as the antecedent, and quotes for similar construction Psalm lxxxvii. 1; Numbers xxiv. 17. Dathe alters *לְעַמִּי* to *לְעַמְּךָ*, and pleads the authority of the ancient version. Kennicott says, "I read *לְעַמְּךָ* with the ancient version." He has also several codices with this reading.

— *Of his anointed.*—*sc.* David himself.

PSALM XXIX.

IN this sublime Hymn the majesty of the divine power and glory are celebrated, as they are displayed in storms of thunder and lightning. The poet commences by calling upon nobles and princes to give to Jehovah the glory that is due to his name. He then describes, with a splendour and magnificence of the loftiest poetry, scarcely if at all equalled by any Greek or Roman bard, the thunder and the lightnings of heaven. These he denominates the voice of Jehovah, which no mortal can hear without an awful sentiment of mingled fear and reverence. After glancing at the terrific effects produced by these mighty agents, and asserting that Jehovah sits supreme over the most stupendous operations of the elements, he concludes by giving assurance to the pious worshippers of this mighty Being, that he will support them in every exigence, and give them peace amidst the most appalling catastrophes by which the globe can be agitated. The learned Michaelis suggests to the readers of this Psalm, that these sublime effects, these majestic displays of omnipotence to which reference is here made, take place in Palestine, where tempests, gathering from the west, and from the Mediterranean sea, burst, with accompanying thunders, over the heights of Lebanon, and force their progress over the Israelitish territory towards the vast wilds of Arabia Deserta.

A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 ASCRIBE unto Jehovah, sons of the mighty,
Ascribe to Jehovah glory and strength.
- 2 Ascribe to Jehovah the glory of his name :
Worship Jehovah in the sanctuary of his majesty.
- 3 The voice of Jehovah is upon the waters :
The God of glory thundereth ; Jehovah is upon the mighty waters.
- 4 The voice of Jehovah is powerful :
The voice of Jehovah is full of majesty.

1. *Sons of the mighty.*—It is not easy to determine what persons are here intended. Some expositors suppose that angels are intended ; others think that the gods of the heathen are meant ; while others look upon them as the mighty of the earth,—princes, nobles, &c. It appears to me that the rulers and chiefs of the Israelitish people are addressed ; for they are exhorted to worship Jehovah in the sanctuary of his majesty. Ver. 2.

2. *The sanctuary of his majesty.* Literally, *In the beauty of holiness.* So Eng. Trans.]—The LXX. translate the words *εν αυλη αγια αυτου* ; the Vulgate, “ in atrio suo sancto.” Psalm xcvi. 9. The prescribed worship of the sanctuary was accompanied by great pomp and splendour ; so that the meaning appears to be, that God should be adored in all the solemn magnificence of his sanctuary.

- 5 The voice of Jehovah breaketh the cedars ;
 Jehovah breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.
- 6 He causeth the mountains to skip like a calf :
 Lebanon and Sirion like a young kid.
- 7 The voice of Jehovah divideth the flames of fire.
- 8 The voice of Jehovah shaketh the wilderness ;
 Jehovah shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.
- 9 The voice of Jehovah causeth the deer to miscarry :
 It maketh bare the forests ;
 And in his palace, every one speaketh of his glory.
- 10 Jehovah sitteth upon the flood :
 Jehovah sitteth King for ever.
- 11 Jehovah will give strength unto his people :
 Jehovah will bless his people with peace.

6. *To skip like a calf.*]—Rosenm. illustrates this passage in the following manner:—Lebanon and Sirion are said to leap at the sound of the thunder, because the trees, animals, buildings, and inhabitants were so agitated by the terrifying crash of the thunder, that the entire mountains seemed as if they trembled and leaped. Lebanon, or Libanus, consists of a vast and lofty ridge of mountains, which strictly forms two ridges; the one towards the west is called Libanus, and that towards the east is named Antilibanus, which is the loftier of the two; the summit of which is covered by perpetual snow. The river Jordan derives its sources from this mountainous region. Antilibanus is called by the Hebrews Hermon; by the Amorites, Shenir; and by the Sidonians, Sirion. So Deut. iii. 9.

— *A young kid.*]—Properly a young oryx, an animal of the goat species.

7. *Divideth the flames of fire.*]—The thunder is accompanied by forked lightning, which greatly augments its terrors. “*Ignibus trisulcis armata dextra Jovis.*” —*Ovid Metam.*

8. *Wilderness of Kadesh.*]—That vast and frightful desert through which Israel passed in their way from Egypt to Canaan. An immense district of Arabia, called also by the names Sin and Paran.

9. *Causeth the deer to miscarry.*]—So appalling is the storm, that the pregnant animals bring forth abortive births, through terror.

— *Maketh bare the forests.* English Bible, *discovereth.*]—The meaning is, that by the vehemence of the storm the trees were stripped of their entire foliage.

— *In his palace.*]—This seems to mean the whole world, celestial and terrestrial; which is the palace or regal abode of Jehovah, whose glory, as displayed in the operations of his providence, is celebrated by all intelligent creatures.

10. *Jehovah sitteth upon the flood.*]—A sublime description, whether applied to the waters of the chaotic mass, of the ocean, or of the great and universal deluge. These, stormy, dark, and agitated by incessant concussions, are subject to the eternal dominion of God, who sits upon them as his throne, in undisturbed serenity.

PSALM XXX.

THE title which is prefixed to this Psalm, as it stands in the English Bible, is attended with some difficulty, as there is nothing in the Psalm that is appropriate to the dedication of a house. It is perfectly clear from the Psalm itself, that it was written to celebrate a deliverance from some very painful and dangerous circumstances with which David had been favoured. He commences it by praising God for deliverance from foes, and, as it would seem by the language which is used, from a dangerous illness. He invites good men to unite with him in praise; and then gives a short narrative of the situation in which he had lately been. He concludes with a determination to exercise never-failing thankfulness for the mercies which he had experienced. The time to which the composition may most probably be referred, is that in which David was distinguished by the great goodness of God which was extended to him during the three days of pestilence which destroyed seventy thousand men. He remarks that in his prosperity he had said, "I shall never be moved;" which seems to relate to the period when, elated by the flourishing state of his kingdom, he insisted on Joab's numbering the people. The fatal consequences of that event are related in 1 Chron. xxi.; and the whole transaction was adapted to draw from David such a tribute of praise and thankfulness. For a further explication of the title, *vide* Additional Notes.

A PSALM OF DAVID. A SONG AT THE DEDICATION OF A HOUSE.

- 1 I WILL extol thee, O Jehovah! for thou hast lifted me up,
And hast not suffered my foes to rejoice over me.
- 2 O Jehovah! my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.
- 3 O Jehovah! thou hast brought me up from Hades:
Thou hast preserved my life, that I should not go down to the grave.
- 4 Sing unto Jehovah, O ye his saints;
And give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.
- 5 For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life;
Weeping may endure for a night, but there is joy in the morning.
- 6 In my prosperity I had said, "I shall never be moved:"
- 7 "By thy favour, O Jehovah! thou hast made my mountain firm."
Thou didst hide thy face, I was troubled.

7. *Thou hast made my mountain firm.*] —It is probable that David here speaks of the mountain of Zion, where his palace was situated; and that he uses

this expression as a representation of his kingdom at large, which the divine bounty had caused so greatly to prosper.

- 8 I cried unto thee, O Jehovah !
And to Jehovah I made supplication.
9 " What will my blood profit, if I go down to the grave ?
" Will the dust praise thee ? will it declare thy truth ?
10 " Hear, O Jehovah ! and have mercy upon me :
" O Jehovah ! be thou my helper."
11 Thou hast turned my mourning into dancing ;
Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness ;
12 To the end that I may sing praise unto thee, and not be silent.
O Jehovah ! my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.
-

PSALM XXXI.

It is an opinion of great antiquity, and which is in itself very likely, that this Psalm was composed by David, in reference to the extraordinary deliverance from the hands of Saul with which he was favoured by a special interference of Providence, related in 1 Sam. xxiii. 19; where it is stated, that the Ziphites informed Saul that David was concealed in strongholds, in the district that was inhabited by them. In consequence of this information, Saul proceeded to the spot, and so arranged his troops as to surround David and the people that were with him. While David was in this critical situation, in which he concluded that the time of his destruction was come, Saul was compelled, by tidings of an invasion made on the land by the Philistines, to turn away from the pursuit of David. On account of this great deliverance, David seems to have written the pathetic poem which is before us; in it he combines the prayers that he had poured forth during his deep distress, with the praises which he offered to his gracious Preserver, when the danger had passed away. Many of the Psalms were composed in this manner, after the events which gave rise to them were ended.

A great part of this affecting poem is couched in terms of deep pathos; in which the writer represents the calamities with which he was environed, as producing the most pungent agony, and affecting his health in a very serious degree. He speaks of the reproach that was cast upon him, not only by his enemies, but, as it seems, by some of the people that were with him, his professed friends, and the voluntary companions of his exile. He complains of these persons, who not merely slandered and calumniated him, but were forming conspiracies against him to take away his life; so that "fear was on every side." Still he retained his hold on God, and supported himself by the hope that he should not be forsaken. The issue has been noticed; and we behold him transported with joy and gratitude, and adoring the signal goodness with which the great Supreme sustains and blesses his faithful servants.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 IN thee, O Jehovah! do I put my trust: let me never be ashamed.
Deliver me in thy righteousness.
- 2 Bow down thy ear to me, rescue me speedily:
Be thou my strong rock, for a house of defence to save me.
- 3 For thou art my rock, and my fortress:
For thy name's sake, therefore, lead me and guide me.
- 4 Pull me out of the net which they have concealed for me:
For thou art my strength.
- 5 Into thy hand I commend my spirit;
Thou hast redeemed me, O Jehovah! God of truth.
- 6 Thou hatest them that regard lying vanities:
But I trust in Jehovah.
- 7 I will be glad, and rejoice in thy mercy;
For thou considerest my trouble, thou favourest me in adversity.
- 8 And thou hast not shut me up in the hand of the enemy:
Thou settest my feet in a spacious place.
- 9 Have mercy upon me, O Jehovah! for I am in trouble:
Wasted with grief is my eye, my soul, and my belly.
- 10 For my life is spent in grief, and my years in sighing:
My strength faileth because of my trouble, and my bones are
wasted.
- 11 I am a subject of reproach to all my enemies:
A burden, and a source of fear to my associates:
They who see me abroad fly from me.
- 12 I am forgotten as a dead man out of remembrance:
I resemble a broken vessel.

6. *Thou hatest, &c.*]—*Vide* Additional Notes.

—*Lying vanities, &c.*]—Idols, which are often thus denominated; though the term is not to be confined to this sense, as all the pursuits of iniquity may be justly comprehended under it. *Vide* Deut. xxxii. 21; Jonah ii. 8.

8. *In a spacious place.*]—There is a contrast in this expression between the straits to which he had been confined and

the freedom which was now bestowed upon him.

10. *Because of my trouble.* English Translation, *My iniquity.*]—The Hebrew term denotes affliction, as well as iniquity; and this is the preferable sense, in this place, where the Psalmist is recounting his sorrows; which were, in this instance, brought upon him by the ill-will of Saul, without any just reason.

11. *A burden.*]—*Vide* Addit. Notes.

- 13 For I hear the slander of many : fear is on every side ;
While they consult together against me, they devise to take away
my life.
- 14 But in thee, O Jehovah ! do I trust :
I have avowed thee to be my God.
- 15 My times are in thy hand : [persecute me.
Deliver me from the hands of my enemies, and from them that
- 16 Make thy face to shine upon thy servant :
Save me for thy mercy's sake.
- 17 Let me not be ashamed, O Jehovah ! for I call upon thee :
Let the wicked be ashamed, let them be silent in Hades.
- 18 Let the lying lips be put to silence, [upright man.
Which speak harshly, proudly, and contemptuously, against an
- 19 O how great is thy goodness, which thou reservest for them that
fear thee ! [of men.
Which thou preparest for them that trust in thee, in the presence
- 20 Thou hidest them in the recess of thy presence, from the con-
spiracies of men :
Thou concealest them in a pavilion from the contention of tongues.
- 21 Blessed be Jehovah ! for he hath shewn me the wonders of his
mercy,
As in a fortified city.
- 22 For I had said in my haste, "I am cut off from before thy eyes."
Yet thou heardest the voice of my supplications, when I cried to
thee. [faithful ;
- 23 O love Jehovah, all ye his saints ! for Jehovah preserveth the
And plentifully recompenseth the proud doer.
- 24 Be of good courage, and he will strengthen your heart ;
All ye that hope in Jehovah.

PSALM XXXII.

THE general opinion of interpreters assigns the composition of this Psalm, with sufficient probability, to the anguish of mind, and agonies of conscience

18. *An upright man.*]—*sc.* David.

20. *Conspiracies.*]—*Vide* Addit. Notes.

21. *As in a fortified city.*]—*Vide* Addi-
tional Notes.

which David felt, on account of the flagrant iniquity with which he was chargeable in the seduction of Bathsheba, and the enormous crimes to which that transgression led. The sacred historian, who relates the events of those times, has most impartially recited David's mournful fall. 2 Sam. xi. xii. He has also, though tacitly, shewn the extraordinary insensibility of the Jewish monarch, which seems not to have been disturbed before Nathan was charged with a message from God to him; in obedience to which, he delivered to David the affecting tale that opened his eyes, and placed full in his view the enormity of his transgressions. To what a dreadful state of feeling he was then brought, we may form some conception from the language which he uses in this Psalm; as well as in the fifty-first, which relates to the same event. He here says, "My bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture was turned into the drought of summer." It was, however, the good pleasure of God to rescue him from this condition of guilt and remorse; to incline him to make an ingenuous acknowledgment of his sin; and to console his disturbed spirit with the assurance of forgiveness and peace. Yet though so singular a favour was conferred upon him, the appalling announcement that Nathan addressed to him was fully accomplished, "The sword shall never depart from thy house;" and the subsequent years of his life were embittered by the strange and almost unparalleled atrocities which were committed by his sons, Amnon and Absalom. During the anguish which David felt on these accounts, his bitterest pangs arose from the consciousness that his sufferings were to be traced to his own disobedience. A lesson was thus read to successive ages, that though God will pardon the utmost guilt of such as humble themselves before him, like this royal penitent, he will yet take care to vindicate his own holiness, and to shew to his offending creatures that "the way of transgressors is hard."

In the Psalm to which our attention is now invited, the repentant king celebrates the mercy which he had experienced, and delivers the most interesting instruction to all those who, in subsequent ages, should read his history, and become acquainted with his shameful fall, and most merciful recovery. In David's case, mercy was extended, that God "might shew forth all long-suffering for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." How powerful this instance of divine and sovereign mercy has been, in producing hope, and strengthening the dying faith of sinful men, will not be fully shewn, till that day in which the secrets of all hearts will be disclosed. May the writer, and the readers of these observations, alike receive instruction from them!

A PSALM OF DAVID. MASCHIL, *i. e.* A MONITORY PSALM.

1 BLESSED is he whose transgression is forgiven,
And whose sin is covered.

TITLE. *Maschil.*]—The opinion of Sir J. D. Michaelis respecting this word is, that it is a general denomination of poems of some peculiar construction: as this

opinion, however, seems to stand on no sufficient ground, the common acceptance of it is here adopted.

- 2 Blessed is the man, to whom Jehovah imputeth not iniquity :
And in whose spirit there is no guile.
- 3 While I kept silence, my bones decayed,
Through my roaring all the day long.
- 4 For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me ;
My moisture was turned into the drought of summer. SELAH.
- 5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee ; and my iniquity I concealed
not.
I said, " I will confess my transgressions unto Jehovah ;"
And thou didst remit the punishment of my sin. SELAH.
- 6 For this will every pious man pray to thee, while thou mayest be
found : [him.
Surely in the overflowing of great waters, they shall not approach
- 7 Thou art my hiding place, thou preservest me from trouble ;
Thou surroundest me with songs of deliverance. SELAH.
- 8 I will instruct thee, and teach thee the way in which thou shalt go :
I will give thee counsel, and fix my eye upon thee.
- 9 Be ye not like a horse, or a mule, which have no understanding ;
Which must be restrained with bit and bridle, their harness,
Because they will not approach unto thee.
- 10 Many are the sorrows of the wicked ;
But mercy will encompass him, who trusteth in Jehovah.
- 11 Be glad in Jehovah, and rejoice O ye righteous !
And shout for joy, all ye upright in heart.

4. *My moisture, &c.*—The injurious effects of his mental anguish on his bodily frame are signified by this comparison drawn from herbs and plants, which, in temperate seasons, abound with sap and moisture ; but during the extreme heat of summer are dried up and wither.

6. *In the overflowing of great waters, &c.*—By this figurative expression are intended, great and overwhelming calamities, which, like torrents swollen by heavy rains, threaten to inundate and destroy whatever opposes their progress.

8. *I will instruct thee, &c.*—There is an apparent uncertainty respecting the

person who is the speaker in this passage. There cannot, however, be much doubt but that David, and not God, addresses these words to the persons whom he aims to instruct. In Psalm li. 13, written about the same time, and on the same occasion, David urges, as a reason why God should restore to him the joy of his salvation, that he might be enabled to teach transgressors his ways, and that sinners might be converted to him. So in the passage before us, he addresses himself to sinners, and says, " I will instruct thee, and teach thee the way in which thou shalt go." *Vide* Addit. Notes.

PSALM XXXIII.

No title is prefixed to this Psalm in Hebrew. The Septuagint ascribes it to David. It would be superfluous to inquire when, or on what account, it was written, as it appears to have no connexion with any specific events; is expressive only of general truths and duties; and is composed with the most entire plainness and perspicuity. It is a hymn of thanksgiving and adoration, which recounts the works of the Most High, in simple but sublime language; and celebrates his praise in most appropriate terms.

- 1 REJOICE in Jehovah, O ye righteous !
Praise is comely for the upright.
- 2 Praise Jehovah with the harp :
Sing unto him with the psaltery, and an instrument of ten strings.
- 3 Sing unto him a new song :
Play skilfully, with a loud noise.
- 4 For the word of Jehovah is right,
And all his works are true.
- 5 He loveth righteousness and judgment :
The earth is full of the goodness of Jehovah.
- 6 By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made ;
And all the host of them, by the breath of his mouth.
- 7 He gathered the waters of the sea together as a heap :
He laid up the deep in storehouses.
- 8 Let all the earth fear Jehovah :
Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him :
- 9 For he spake, and it was done :
He commanded, and it stood fast.

2. *With the harp.*]—Spanheim observes, that the harp was struck, or played upon with a plectrum, an instrument adapted to this purpose, but that the psaltery was struck with the fingers. So Josephus, *Antiq.* vii.

3. *A new song.*]—One not yet heard.

4. *The word of Jehovah.*]—*sc.* His commands and appointments.

—*His works are true.*]—*sc.* His dispensations, the works of his government

and providence, are faithful, agreeable to his declarations and promises.

7. *The waters of the sea as a heap.*]—This is a reference to Gen. i. 9; “ God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together, unto one place.” The reader will not fail to notice and admire the sublime simplicity and the chaste magnificence of the language, in which the most prodigious and inconceivable events are expressed in the plainest terms.

- 10 Jehovah frustrateth the counsel of the nations :
He maketh the devices of the peoples of no effect.
- 11 The counsel of Jehovah standeth for ever ;
The thoughts of his heart, to all generations.
- 12 Blessed is the nation, whose God is Jehovah :
The people which he chooseth for his own inheritance.
- 13 Jehovah looketh down from heaven ;
He beholdeth all the sons of men.
- 14 From the place of his abode,
He looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth.
- 15 He formeth their hearts alike :
He considereth all their works.
- 16 No king is saved by the multitude of a host ;
A mighty man is not delivered by much strength.
- 17 A horse is a vain thing for safety :
Neither can he deliver by his great strength.
- 18 Behold ! the eye of Jehovah is upon them that fear him :
Upon them that hope in his mercy :
- 19 To rescue their soul from death,
And to keep them alive in famine.
- 20 Our soul waiteth for Jehovah :
He is our help, and our shield.
- 21 Surely in him shall our heart rejoice,
Because we trust in his holy name.
- 22 Let thy mercy, O Jehovah ! be upon us,
According as we hope in thee.

PSALM XXXIV.

THE history of this Psalm is indicated in the title, and is related more at large, 1 Sam. xxi. 11. It consists of expressions of fervent thankfulness for the

15. *He formeth their hearts alike.*—The word hearts is here, as it frequently is, put for the intellectual faculties of men, which are all equally the production of the Most High, and with the operations of which he is perfectly conversant.

“ He that formed the eye, shall he not see ? ” &c.

18. *The eye of Jehovah is upon them that fear him.*—He beholds them with constant never-failing regard and kindness. *Vide* Psalm xxxii. 8.

signal preservation which David had experienced, when he was reduced to a most degrading and painful condition: it addresses encouragement to other persons who may be in deep troubles, deduced from the mighty, though unseen, agency which the Most High employs for them that reverence him, and rely on the truth and faithfulness of his promises: and it terminates with assurances of a final deliverance from all evil, to be enjoyed by the servants of God. The numerous sorrows to which David was subjected in his course towards the crown of Israel, and the never-failing care of Providence which upheld him during their pressure, and at length rescued him from them all, may well suggest to us feelings of acquiescence in the dispensations of Heaven. If our profession of Christianity be upright, we have a King of far higher dignity than David, who humbled himself in so stupendous a degree as to make himself of no reputation; who, "though he was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God," yet submitted to the deepest sorrows, that he might rescue from unimaginable sorrows all who believe in his name; and who, amidst the sharpest pains, and deepest anguish, uttered no accents but those of lowly acquiescence in the good pleasure of his heavenly Father. He was actuated by an invincible belief that the will of God is founded in perfect rectitude and consummate wisdom: and he teaches his disciples to say, without intermission, "Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." Whatever moral inducements to patience and calmness of mind may be pressed upon our notice, they derive their greatest effect from Christ's example, and from the promises which he has left us of an energy spiritual and divine, which he imparts to all who rely on his gracious interference. They thus are led to regard the sorrows of time as but the sufferings of a moment, when contrasted with "the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," which is ready to be disclosed. *Καθ' ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν αἰωνίου βάρους δόξης.* 2 Cor. iv. 17. Which may be rendered, "The eternal magnitude of glory, which is exceeding beyond excess."

A PSALM OF DAVID. WHEN HE CHANGED HIS BEHAVIOUR BEFORE ABINELECH,
WHO DROVE HIM AWAY, AND HE DEPARTED.

- 1 I WILL bless Jehovah at all times:
His praise shall continually be in my mouth.
- 2 My soul maketh her boast in Jehovah:
The afflicted hear, and are glad.
- 3 O magnify Jehovah, with me;
And let us exalt his name together.
- 4 I sought Jehovah, and he heard me;
And delivered me from all my fears.

2. *The afflicted.* Eng. trans. *the humble.*]—The word is applicable to both, but the sense which is here assigned to it is

most in unison with the purpose of the writer, which evidently was to console and support the companions of his adversity.

- 5 They look to him, and are enlightened ;
And their faces are not ashamed.
- 6 This poor man cried, and Jehovah hearkened,
And saved him from all his troubles.
- 7 The angel of Jehovah encampeth around them that fear him,
And delivereth them.
- 8 O taste ye, and see that Jehovah is good :
Blessed is the man that trusteth in him.
- 9 O fear Jehovah, ye his saints ;
For there is no want to them that fear him.
- 10 Young lions are in want, and suffer hunger ;
But they that seek Jehovah want not any good.
- 11 Come, ye children, hearken to me ;
I will teach you the fear of Jehovah.
- 12 What man desireth life, and loveth days,
That he may see good ?
- 13 Keep thy tongue from evil,
And thy lips from speaking guile.
- 14 Depart from evil, and do good :
Seek peace, and pursue it.
- 15 The eyes of Jehovah are upon the righteous ;
And his ears upon their cry.
- 16 The face of Jehovah is against them that do evil :
To cut off their memorial from the earth.
- 17 They cry, and Jehovah heareth them,
And delivereth them from all their trouble.

5. *They look to him, and are enlightened.*]—The pronoun “they” is related to the righteous, in ver. 2. We have an instance of similar construction in ver. 17, where the pronoun refers, not to the last, but to a more distant antecedent, *viz.* the righteous, in ver. 15. These persons were “enlightened;” the gloom and dismay that darkened their countenances gave way to a cheerful and gladsome aspect.

6. *This poor man.*]—*sc.* David, who speaks of himself in the third person, which is more graphical and picturesque than if he had used the first person, and

merely said, “I cried.” This was evidently addressed to his immediate companions, and was intended to point their attention to the happy effect of his reliance upon God.

8. *Taste ye.*]—*i. e.* Trust in Jehovah, and you will discover from his goodness to you how excellent a thing it is to confide in him.

10. *Young lions.*]—These savage and rapacious beasts, in the vigour of their youth and strength, may possibly, from the scarcity of prey, be reduced to the last extremities; but Jehovah will defend his servants, and supply their every need.

- 18 Jehovah is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart,
And saveth such as are of a contrite spirit.
- 19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous ;
But Jehovah rescueth him from them all.
- 20 He keepeth all his bones :
Not one of them is broken.
- 21 Calamity will slay the wicked ;
And they that hate the righteous shall be condemned.
- 22 Jehovah redeemeth the soul of his servants :
And none that trust in him shall be condemned.

PSALM XXXV.

THE sacred composition which now comes before us is filled with lamentations of the most mournful kind, which were occasioned by the perfidy, treachery, and cruelty of the persons whose characters and conduct are described in it. It appears to have been written by David, but it is matter of question whether the purpose of it was to relate the sufferings which he himself endured, or to predict those by which his divine descendant, the Messiah, was to expiate human guilt, and "bring in everlasting righteousness." Our blessed Saviour applies the nineteenth verse of the Psalm to his own circumstances, John xv. 25; but the manner of the reference is such as to leave it doubtful, whether he cites it as properly prophetic of himself, or uses it merely as an apt illustration of the condition in which he was placed; a mode in which the Old Testament is sometimes quoted in the New. I am not sure that this doubt can be satisfactorily resolved; but as the whole of the contents of the Psalm may justly, and without force, be applied either to David or to the Messiah, we may, in this case, adopt a principle of interpretation which has been received from the earliest times by Christian writers, that David's history is to be taken as typical, or adumbratory of the history of the Messiah. This appears to me to be a case altogether different from that of the twenty-second Psalm, the second, and several others; the whole of which can, by no legitimate interpretation, be assigned to David, and is therefore to be regarded as altogether and solely applicable to the Messiah.

We shall thus be justified, in regard to this Psalm, in looking upon it as having been written to describe the afflictions of David, which were brought upon him by the parricidal conduct of Absalom, and the base treachery of

18. *That are of a broken heart, and of a contrite spirit.*—These two characteristics are descriptive of the same thing; they

mean the persons who are deeply dejected and full of anguish on account of the inextricable troubles in which they are involved.

Ahitophel; which are the most probable immediate objects of it, but so constructed, under divine superintendence, as to be applicable, with greater force and propriety, to the blessed Redeemer and King of the Church. Contemplated in this light, it sets before us the pity, condescension, and love of that exalted person, who submitted to sorrow, to shame, and to suffering, that he might thus work out redemption for wretched and guilty mortals, in ways agreeable to the infinite wisdom, righteousness, and love of the sole Governor of the universe, the only wise God, our Saviour, to whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 PLEAD against them, O Jehovah ! that strive with me :
Fight against them who fight against me.
- 2 Take hold of the shield and the buckler,
And arise for my help,
- 3 Draw out the spear, and the scymitar, to oppose my persecutors :
Say to my soul, " I am thy salvation."
- 4 Let them be confounded, and put to shame, who seek my life :
Let them be turned back, and brought to disgrace, who devise
my hurt.
- 5 Let them be as chaff before the wind :
And let the angel of Jehovah beat them down.
- 6 Let their way be dark and slippery ;
And let the angel of Jehovah persecute them.
- 7 For without cause, they have hidden their net for me ;
Without cause, they have digged a pit for my life.
- 8 Let destruction, of which he is not aware, come upon him ;
Let his net also, which he hath hidden, catch himself :
Into that very destruction let him fall.
- 9 Then shall my soul be joyful in Jehovah ;
It shall rejoice in his salvation.
- 10 All my bones shall say, Who is like thee, O Jehovah !

3. *And the scymitar.* The Eng. Bible has, *stop the way*, but the Hebrew has nothing for *the way*.]—The word most probably means, " a scymitar," *σάγαις*, a sort of battle-axe used by the Persians, Scythians, &c. So Drusius, Vitringa, Michaelis, &c.

8. *Come upon him.*]—The Psalmist here changes the plural for the singular ; to intimate either, that some one of his enemies was the chief and leader of the others, or that each of them was included in this distributive form of speech.

- Thou deliverest the afflicted from him that is stronger than he:
 Even the afflicted and the deserted from him that robbeth him.
- 11 Violent witnesses rise up;
 They require answers concerning what I am not conscious of.
- 12 They requite me with evil for good,
 To the destitution of my soul.
- 13 But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth;
 I afflicted my soul with fasting;
 And my prayer was directed to my bosom.
- 14 I behaved myself as if for my friend, or my brother;
 Like one that bewaileth his mother, in sorrow, I was bowed down.
- 15 But in my adversity they rejoiced, and gathered together;
 Even calumniators gathered together against me, but I knew not:
 They lashed me with their tongues, and ceased not.
- 16 Among profligate parasites, they gnashed their teeth at me.

13. *My prayer was directed to my bosom.*]—Of the many interpretations that are given of this passage, that appears to me to be the most probable which derives it from the posture of the worshipper; who, standing with his head inclined downwards toward his bosom, turned away his attention from all external objects, and uttered his mournful and earnest requests as if they were directed to his own bosom. Such a posture of devotion was in use both among Jews and Mohammedans. *Koehler in Repertor. Lit. Orient.*; and *Reland de Relig. Mohammedica*.

14. *In sorrow I was bowed down.*]—The pungent grief which a mother's death occasions to an affectionate son is here used to express the benevolent regard and deep solicitude which the Psalmist felt for the recovery and welfare of his adversaries. So deep was his concern for their sufferings, that he went in a mourning posture, declining or stooping towards the ground.

15. *In my adversity, &c.*]—This and the next verse are attended with some difficulty. Expositors differ widely in accounting for the construction and sense of some of the words; but their interpre-

tations nearly concur in supporting the general sense which is involved in the version here given. *Vide* Additional Notes. The general sense is, that the writer of the Psalm is describing the cruel and ungrateful treatment which he experienced in return for his kindness: he says, his adversaries calumniated him, and met together in parties to express their joy at the evils which had befallen him; and that, while he was unconscious of having given any cause for such conduct, and was even a stranger to the existence of any ill-will towards himself, they were indulging their malevolence against him by the most cutting and slanderous invectives, and incessantly repeating to each other their expressions of hatred against him. In ver. 16 he describes them as making his distress a topic of malignant jocularity; as being associated with buffoons and jesters, in order more completely to gratify their spleen; and so actuated by rage and hatred as even to gnash their teeth to express the savage feelings by which they were agitated. So, Acts vii. 54, it is said of the murderers of Stephen, that "they gnashed on him with their teeth."

- 17 O Lord ! how long wilt thou look on ?
 Rescue my soul from their destructions,
 My solitary one from the lions.
- 18 I will give thanks to thee in a great assembly ;
 Among a multitude of people will I praise thee.
- 19 Let them not rejoice over me who are my enemies wrongfully :
 They that hate me without cause, wink the eye.
- 20 For they speak not peaceably ;
 But against the quiet of the land, they devise deceitful things.
- 21 They open their mouths wide upon me :
 They say, Aha ! aha ! our eye beholds it !
- 22 Thou sceest, O Jehovah ! keep not silence :
 O Lord ! be not far from me.
- 23 Arouse thyself, awake to the decision of my cause ;
 Of my cause, my God and my Lord !
- 24 Judge me, O Jehovah ! my God, according to thy righteousness ;
 And let them not rejoice over me.
- 25 Let them not say in their hearts, Aha ! it is as we wish !
 We will swallow him up. [hurt :
- 26 Let them be ashamed and confounded at once, who rejoice at my
 Let them be clothed with shame who magnify themselves against
 me.
- 27 Let those who favour my righteous cause shout and be glad ;
 Let them say continually, May Jehovah be magnified,
 Who favoureth the prosperity of his servant !
- 28 Then shall my tongue declare thy righteousness,
 And thy praise, all the day long.

17. *My solitary one.*—The same term occurs in Psalm xxii. 20, where, as here, the English Bible has “ my darling ; ” but the more correct notion is, that of being alone and unprotected, except by divine and unseen power.

19. *Wink the eye.*—An indication of the satisfaction which they drew from the success of their plans.

21. *Open their mouths wide.*—*Vide* Psalm xxii. 13.

23. *Arouse thyself.*—*Vide* Psalm vii. 6. We can scarcely avoid to remark the similitude between this part of the Psalm before us and some parts of the twenty-second ; and to observe that, though the language may be descriptive of David's sorrows, it is, in a far completer and higher sense, applicable to the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ, as they are narrated by the Evangelists.

PSALM XXXVI.

THIS Psalm bears the name of David as its author, who is described in the title as being "the servant of Jehovah," which he was in an eminent degree. The contents of the Psalm fully bear up this description. On some occasion, which we have not the means of ascertaining, David was engaged in reflecting upon the crimes which he witnessed, probably in the court, and among the associates of Saul: and he expresses his deep persuasion that men so lost to truth, and piety, and virtue, were at least practical, if not speculative atheists: "who had no fear of God before their eyes." No conclusion to which we can come is, indeed, more certain, than that the habitual practice of wickedness is, notwithstanding all professions to the contrary, a proof that men support themselves in their lawless courses, by indulging the suggestions of infidelity, and flattering themselves that no retribution awaits them for their crimes, if they can but escape the animadversion of their fellow mortals. The history of men in all ages is replete with instances, in which they so far liberate themselves from the restraints which a belief of the justice and holiness of God would have imposed upon them, as to violate the most sacred obligations of truth, humanity, and justice, in order to gratify their own selfish, proud, ambitious, or cruel propensities. The Psalmist having given utterance to such musings of his bosom, proceeds to contrast with these impious suggestions and practices, the truth, rectitude, and diffusive benignity of the blessed God; and concludes his devout meditations by an earnest request that himself, and all good men, may be rescued from the unbelieving and unrighteous practices of the wicked. Amyrald, a well-known expositor of the Psalms, argues at considerable length to show, that this Psalm was written about the time when Saul gave his daughter Michal to David, with a secret hope that his marriage with her might, in some way or other, promote his revengeful and murderous designs against him. But there are no data on which to found such a hypothesis.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. A PSALM OF DAVID, THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH.

- 1 THE transgression of the wicked saith within my heart,
"There is no fear of God before his eyes."
- 2 For he flattereth himself in his own sight,
That his iniquity will not be found to be hateful.

1. *The transgression, &c.*—There is some ambiguity in the expression of this clause, which may be removed by a paraphrase of the following kind: "The criminal conduct of wicked men affirms, when I attentively consider it, that they have no fear of God before their eyes." The reasoning is, wicked men live in

such a course, that we cannot fail to conclude respecting them, that the real source of their conduct is to be traced up to the absence of all fear and reverence for the omniscience and righteousness of God.

2. *That his iniquity, &c.*—It may, I think, be objected, that the version of this clause in the English translation

- 3 The words of his mouth are impious and deceitful;
He hath left off to be wise and to do good.
- 4 He deviseth crimes upon his bed : [evil.
He setteth himself in a way that is not good, he abhorreth not
- 5 Thy mercy, O Jehovah ! is in the heavens ;
Thy faithfulness in the clouds.
- 6 Thy righteousness is like the great mountains ;
Thy judgments are a deep abyss.
O Jehovah ! thou preservest man and beast !
- 7 How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God ! [wings.
And the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy
- 8 They are abundantly supplied with the delicacies of thy house ;
And thou permittest them to drink of the river of thy pleasures.
- 9 For with thee is the fountain of life :
In thy light we behold light.
- 10 O continue thy loving kindness to them that love thee ;
And thy righteousness to the upright in heart.
- 11 Let not the foot of pride come against me ;
Let not the hand of the wicked remove me.

does not agree with the sentiment which the writer intended to assert. The wicked, it is said, "flattereth himself in his own eyes." Now the persons here intended were, at the very time when the Psalmist was writing, persisting in their impious and unjust conduct; nor did they, at that time, discover, or think that other persons discovered, the odiousness of their doings; they flattered themselves, and encouraged themselves in their wickedness, by the delusion which they put upon themselves, that their crimes would not be viewed as the hateful things which they really were. Their self-flattery acted, therefore, as an inducement to encourage them in the course which was most agreeable to their base passions and unjust inclinations. *Vide Additional Notes.*

5. *Thy mercy is in the heavens.*—The divine benignity is so vast and diffusive, that it reaches to the utmost extent, and

spreads itself even to the clouds and to the heavens. So Psalm ciii. 11, 12.

6. *Like the great mountains.* Literally, *mountains of God.*—So firm and unmovable is the divine righteousness based upon omnipotence and infinite wisdom.

—*Thy judgments.*—Thy dispensations and the events of thy providence are too profound to be fathomed or comprehended by feeble mortals.

8. *With the delicacies of thy house.*—The connexion of these words makes it evident, that the "house" here intended is the world, which abounds with whatever may minister to the support or delight of the animal and rational creation.

9. *In thy light we shall behold light.*—There is a double figure here used. In the first case, light is put for divine emanations of bountiful favour; and then it is used to signify prosperity or happiness. *Sc.* "In thy diffusive goodness we enjoy happiness."

12 Fallen are the workers of iniquity!

They are beaten down, and they have no power to rise.

PSALM XXXVII.

THE unequal and apparently fortuitous distribution of good and evil in the world has always been regarded as a thing difficult to be reconciled with a belief of the superintendence of a wise, powerful, and righteous Governor. The wicked often prosper; while, in numerous instances, the righteous are the children of adversity and sorrow. During the existence of the Mosaic dispensation, which was sanctioned by promises of prosperity to the good, and by denunciations of adversity to be inflicted upon the bad, no small degree of deviation from these general rules was permitted to take place. Even then, we find language like the following, uttered by good men; "I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked." Psalm lxxiii. 3. That such a state of things becomes a source of trial to men, cannot be questioned. It tries the righteous, by putting to the test their faith in God, and their patient submission to his appointments; it also tries the wicked, by affording scope for the exercise of their evil propensities; for, as good men are confirmed by this discipline in habits of piety and virtue, bad men are established in their impiety, and encouraged, as they imagine, to proceed in their irregular courses, till they become altogether obdurate in the practice of unrighteousness, and yield themselves up without restraint to the domination of evil. Such, in a greater or smaller degree, has been, and continues to be, the condition of men upon earth; and to this cause we are to ascribe the origin of the Psalm which now comes under our review.

David witnessed the discouragements to which feeble faith and imperfect piety exposed his countrymen; and he engaged in the composition of this Psalm, which forms a didactic poem of great pathos and beauty, for the purpose of removing the false appearances which triumphant impiety and afflicted virtue cast over the dispensations of Providence. How well he has succeeded, the increase of faith and consolation, amidst the mysterious arrangements of the Most High, supplies the most satisfactory proof. Multitudes in every succeeding age have been instructed and supported by the sacred truths which are here pressed upon their attention; nor can any one peruse with serious regard these stanzas, without fervent thankfulness to the Father of lights, who disposed and enabled his servant to compose so wise and attractive a lesson.

The structure of this Psalm, agreeably to the suggestions of Moses Amyrald,

12. *Fallen are the workers of iniquity.*]—The Hebrew particle which is translated "there," is significant of time as well as place. It is here emphatical, and might

have been translated "now;" but the expression here adopted has greater force, and predicts events to come as being so certain, that they may be said to have taken place.

is irregular: the poet binds himself to no strict order; no coherency of parts is to be looked for in it; yet the consecutive sentences, as they drop from the pen of the writer, are so arranged as to bear the same relation to each other as is seen in a collection of beauteous flowers, or in the gems or pearls which form a splendid collar, 'with no other relation than what arises from the position in which they are set, and the thread which pierces and forms them into a magnificent whole.

A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 FRET not thyself on account of evil doers;
Neither be thou envious of the workers of iniquity:
- 2 For they will soon be cut down like grass,
And wither as the green herb.
- 3 Trust in Jehovah, and do good:
Thou shalt dwell in the land, and live in security.
- 4 Delight thyself also in Jehovah,
And he will give thee the desires of thy heart.
- 5 Commit thy way unto Jehovah;
Trust also in him, and he will accomplish all:
- 6 For he will bring forth thy righteousness as the light,
And thy rectitude as the noon-day.
- 7 Rest in Jehovah, and wait patiently for him:
Fret not thyself on account of him who prospereth in his way,
On account of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.
- 8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath;
Fret not thyself, so as to do evil;
- 9 For cvil doers will be cut off;
But they who wait for Jehovah will inherit the land.
- 10 For yet a little while, and the wicked will not be;
Thou shalt attentively consider his place, but he will not be;
- 11 For the meek will inherit the land,
And delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

3. *And live in security.*]—There is a greater departure from the English Bible here in appearance than in reality; "Verily thou shalt be fed." The Hebrew term which is here translated "Verily," is a noun, significant of truth, stedfastness,

or security; and the literal version is "feed in security."

6. *Thy rectitude.*]—English translation, "thy judgment," is equivocal, and conveys no definite sense.

- 12 The wicked plotteth against the just,
And gnasheth at him with his teeth.
- 13 The Lord will laugh at him ;
For he seeth that his day is approaching.
- 14 The wicked draw out the sword, they bend their bow,
To cast down the afflicted and the destitute,
To slay them that are upright in the way.
- 15 Their sword shall pierce their own heart ;
And their bows shall be broken.
- 16 Better is the little which a righteous man hath,
Than the riches of many wicked :
- 17 For the arms of the wicked will be broken ;
But Jehovah sustaineth the just.
- 18 Jehovah understandeth the course of the righteous :
And their inheritance will be perpetual.
- 19 They will not be ashamed in the time of calamity ;
But in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.
- 20 For the wicked, even the enemies of Jehovah, will perish :
As the fat of lambs they will be consumed ;
As smoke they will vanish away.
- 21 The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again :
But the righteous is merciful, and giveth.
- 22 Surely those whom Jehovah blesseth will inherit the land :
And those whom he curseth will be cut off.
- 23 The steps of a good man are supported by Jehovah ;
He also delighteth in his way.
- 24 When he falleth, he will not be prostrated,
For Jehovah taketh hold of his hand.
- 25 I have been young, and I am become old ;
Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken,
Nor his offspring begging bread.

20. *As the fat of lambs.*—This similitude is taken from the sacrificial services of the Hebrews. Lambs were offered in large numbers as burnt-offerings, the fat of which was rapidly consumed, and the smoke arising from the flames quickly disappeared in the air.

25. *Nor his offspring begging bread.*—

These words must be taken as a general observation, not absolutely verified in every case ; yet the strict fact is, I apprehend, that the immediate descendants of truly pious persons are very seldom, if ever, reduced to such extremities, unless by their own great imprudence, or their abandoned practices.

- 26 He is ever merciful, and lendeth,
And his offspring becometh a blessing.
- 27 Depart from evil, and do good ;
And thou shalt dwell in the land perpetually.
- 28 For Jehovah loveth justice, and forsaketh not his saints ;
They are preserved for ever :
But the offspring of the wicked will be cut off.
- 29 The righteous will inherit the land ;
And dwell in it perpetually.
- 30 The mouth of the righteous uttereth wisdom ;
And his tongue talketh of righteousness.
- 31 The law of his God is in his heart ;
His steps shall not slip.
- 32 The wicked watcheth the righteous,
And seeketh to slay him :
- 33 Jehovah will not leave him in his hand,
Nor condemn him when he cometh into judgment.
- 34 Wait on Jehovah, and keep his way :
He will exalt thee to inherit the land :
When the wicked are cut off thou shalt see it.
- 35 I have seen the wicked very formidable,
And spreading his branches, like a flourishing native tree.
- 36 I passed by, and lo ! he was not :
I sought him, but he was not to be found.
- 37 Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright :
For the end of that man is peace.

36. *I passed by.*—The English Trans. has "he passed away," agreeably to the present reading of the Hebrew text ; but the Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate, and Jerome, read the verb in the first person, which is more in consistency with the form of the sentence.

There is an additional observation that appears requisite to be made on the application of the assurances and promises that are contained in this Psalm. It cannot be denied, that these relate chiefly to temporal benefits and advantages ; still we may with great probability

conclude, that the future and final felicity of good men, in another life, was not altogether out of the view of the inspired author. It was not agreeable to the spirit and genius of the dispensation under which he lived, to render this subject prominent ; yet, as it is certain, from several passages in the Psalms, that David was not a stranger to the hope of blessings far superior to any that are earthly, we may, with entire satisfaction, conclude, that there is a tacit reference to them in several of the declarations of this Psalm. *Vide Appendix, No. 2.*

- 38 But the transgressors will together be destroyed :
The end of the wicked will be cut off.
- 39 The safety of the righteous is from Jehovah :
He is their strength in the time of trouble.
- 40 And Jehovah will help them, he will deliver them ;
He will deliver them from the wicked, and preserve them ;
Because they trust in him.

PSALM XXXVIII.

THIS most mournful and penitential poem is supposed by some of the critics to relate to no individual, but to be significant of the grievous sufferings of the entire people of the Hebrews. No valid reason is, or can be, assigned for this improbable opinion. There is not a syllable in the Psalm which indicates any such application : nor can any authority, which is of the least value, be pleaded in support of it. It is granted that the title, like all the other titles of the Psalms, was not written by David ; but it is undeniable that these superscriptions are of great antiquity, and may very fairly be received, except in the cases where there is a manifest incongruity between them and the compositions to which they are prefixed. Nothing of this kind is to be found in the Psalm that is before us ; and the suggestion appears to me to be nothing more than the wantonness of fancy, which indulges itself in criticisms, that, as far as they are permitted to have any influence, effect nothing but the overthrow of commonly-received principles ; and have a direct tendency to introduce an universal scepticism. The modern scholars who support this theory would be but ill-pleased to be placed in the rank of enthusiasts, who build their speculations on the merest reveries of a heated imagination and a distempered judgment ; but we witness many instances of the existence of a literary enthusiasm, that is not a whit more reasonable than the uncurbed license which speculates upon the holy Scriptures, and the truths that are contained in them, as if it was the sole office of a critic to demonstrate the extent of his ingenuity, by the flimsy hypotheses which he employs his talents and his exertions to support. It may possibly be thought that this is a censure not called for, in a case like the present ; nor would it have been delivered, but for the mischievous effects of such criticism, in matters of greater moment.

We conclude, then, that David is the writer of this sacred poem ; and that he evidently composed it, in relation to himself, when under the pressure of extreme affliction and great mental agony. It seems most likely to have been occasioned by Absalom's unnatural and rebellious proceedings : and that the pungent anguish of that period was aggravated by the vivid recollections of that great transgression which brought on David the tremendous denunciation, " the sword shall never depart from thy house." 2 Sam. xii. 10. The consciousness

of that sad fall seems to have returned to his bosom with increased force, and to have sunk him into an agony of fear and grief, little short of entire despair. Understood in this manner, the Psalm offers a most instructive caution to persons of professed piety, "to watch, and to be sober," lest they should be betrayed into the commission of offences, the guilt of which may abide near to them, and cause them to "go mourning to the grave." At the same time, it furnishes a consolatory instance for the encouragement of disconsolate and repentant transgressors, to induce them still to hope in God, and in the mercy which "there is with him, that he may be feared." No accumulation of suffering, no aggravated sins, ought to be permitted to stand in the way of any one who desires, even in the direst circumstances, to come to God for forgiveness and hope. "Pardon my iniquity, for it is great."

A PSALM OF DAVID, TO BRING TO REMEMBRANCE.

- 1 O JEHOVAH ! rebuke me not in thy anger :
Neither chastise me in thy hot displeasure.
- 2 For thy arrows stick fast in me ;
And thy hand presseth upon me.
- 3 There is no soundness in my flesh, on account of thy displeasure ;
Neither is there health in my body, because of my sin.
- 4 For my iniquities have overwhelmed me ;
Like a weighty burden, they are too heavy for me.
- 5 My wounds are offensive, and corrupt,
On account of my foolishness.
- 6 I am distorted, I am bowed down greatly ;
I go mourning all the day long.
- 7 For my loins are filled with painful heat ;
And there is no soundness in my flesh.
- 8 I am enfeebled, and bruised exceedingly :
I roar, through the disquietude of my heart.

TITLE. *To bring to remembrance.*—As usual, there is great diversity of opinion relative to the sense of these words. The most likely interpretation is, that David designed this Psalm to commemorate his great troubles, and the merciful deliverance which God was pleased to effect for him. With this the most learned Grotius agrees.

5. *My wounds are offensive, &c.*—These

expressions seem to be in a great measure figurative, and significant rather of the diseased state of his mind than of his body; yet anguish so intense must have had a very injurious effect upon his health. Dathe is of opinion that he compares his afflicted and wretched condition with that of a leper infected by a loathsome disease, and from contact with which all men fled. This opinion is strengthened by ver. 11.

- 9 O Lord ! all my desire is before thee ;
And my groaning is not concealed from thee.
- 10 My heart palpitateth, my strength forsaketh me ;
The light of my eyes also departeth from me.
- 11 My friends and associates stand aloof from my stroke ;
And my kinsmen abide at a distance.
- 12 They also that seek my life are laying snares ;
They that seek my hurt speak wickedly,
And talk of deceitful stratagems, all the day long.
- 13 But I, as a deaf man, hear not ;
Even as a dumb man, who openeth not his mouth.
- 14 I resemble a man that heareth not,
And in whose mouth there are no reproofs.
- 15 For, for thee, O Jehovah ! do I wait :
Thou wilt answer, O Lord ! my God.
- 16 For I speak, lest they should rejoice over me ;
When my foot slippeth, they talk proudly.
- 17 For I am ready to halt :
And my distress is continually before me.
- 18 Therefore, I declare my iniquity ;
I am grieved for my sin.
- 19 But my enemies are vigorous ; they are strong :
They also, who hate me wrongfully, are multiplied.
- 20 They, who render evil for good, are my adversaries,
Because I am a follower of that which is good :
- 21 Forsake me not, O Jehovah !
O my God ! be not far from me.
- 22 Make haste to help me :
O Lord ! my salvation.

13. *But I, as a deaf man.*]—The Psalmist thus expresses the helplessness of his condition. All remonstrance and exhortation was useless with his inveterate enemies ; he, therefore, turns away from men as one who expects nothing from them, and commits all his sorrows to God, his Saviour and Redeemer.

16. *For I speak.*] — *i. e.* I speak in supplication to my great deliverer. He was silent in respect of men, yet his voice was addressed to God in accents of fervent prayer, accompanied by acknowledgments of his sin, and of the deep concern which he felt on account of it.

PSALM XXXIX.

THE purposes for which this Psalm was written may be collected from the expressions that are contained in it; though it affords no assistance towards a discovery of the precise occasion on which it was composed. It was manifestly prompted by a season of pain and anguish under which the author was suffering, and which he ascribes to his own transgressions as the cause. He begins by declaring a purpose which he had formed, not to add to his guiltiness by accusing the dispensations of Heaven, or by repining at the sorrow which he was compelled to endure. As the means of adhering strictly to this intention, he determined to refrain altogether from speaking, especially in the hearing of irreligious persons, lest he might be betrayed, by the strength of his feelings, to utter any thing at variance with the reverence and submission that are due to God, of which such persons might avail themselves to justify their own impious language, and to aid them in their attempts to cast a blot upon the profession of greater degrees of religion than those to which they laid claim. At length, however, his feelings prevailed over his purpose: his pain was so aggravated by silence, that he could no longer restrain himself from giving utterance to the strong emotions by which his bosom was agitated. In the concluding parts of the Psalm he expresses the sentiments which then burst from his lips.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN: TO JEDUTHUN. A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 I DETERMINED to attend to my ways, that I might not sin with
my tongue: [my presence.
I will restrain my mouth as with a bridle, while the wicked is in
2 I was dumb in silence; I abstained from what is good:
Thus my pain was increased. [kindled;
3 My heart became hot within me, in my agitation, the fire was
I spake with my tongue. [what it is;
4 "O Jehovah! teach me my end, even the measure of my days,
"That I may learn how frail I am."
5 Behold, thou hast made my days a hand's breadth:

2. *I abstained from what is good.*—He kept himself not only from uttering complaints and repinings, but also from expressions of piety and truth; but the force which he put upon himself so increased his painful sensations, that they became like a fire within him, which at

length burst all limits, and, by the anguish which it occasioned, compelled him to abandon the purpose which he had formed.

5. *A hand's breadth.*—*scil.* A palm, the breadth of four fingers; a hyperbolic representation of the brevity of life.

The duration of my life is nothing in thy sight :

Truly every living man is vanity altogether.

- 6 Truly every man walketh as a shadow; truly in vain are they dis-
quieted : [possess them.

Every man heapeth up treasures; but he knoweth not who will

- 7 And now, what is my expectation?

O Lord! my hope is in thee.

- 8 Deliver me from all my transgressions :

Make me not an object of reproach to the foolish.

- 9 I am dumb, I open not my mouth,

Because thou doest the whole.

- 10 Remove thy stroke away from me :

By the blow of thy hand I am destroyed.

- 11 With rebukes thou chastisest man for iniquity ; [ment.

Then thou destroyest his goodness, as a moth destroyeth a gar-

Truly every man is vanity.

- 12 Hear my prayer, O Jehovah! and attend to my cry :

Be not silent at my tears ;

For in thy presence I am a stranger,

And a sojourner, as all my fathers were.

5. *In thy sight, &c.*—“One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” 2 Pet. iii. 8. “If in the same small apartment we kindle a very diminutive taper, and place it near the flame of a blazing torch of very large dimensions, its light will become imperceptible; then, if both these lights are brought forth under the splendour of a meridian sun, the larger, equally with the smaller, is reduced to perfect insignificance, and we perceive no light from either. So, in human estimation, a thousand years is a prodigiously greater duration than one day; but, when compared with the eternal duration of God, both sink alike into mere nothing.” I here quote, not the words, but the thoughts of Saurin, as I have not the book in my possession.

6. *Walketh as a shadow.*—There is the semblance of solidity in the life of man, but no reality. *Vide* Addit. Notes.

11. *As a moth.*—The English Bible has “Thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth.” But this gives no correct or suitable sense. The design is to state, not that the moth is consumed, but that it is a consumer or spoiler of garments.

12. *I am a stranger, &c.*—This expression, which occurs several times in the sacred writings, is taken from Levit. xxv. 23. As it stands there, it represents the whole people of the Hebrews as strangers and sojourners; they had no independent right in the land; it was God's, who was the Proprietor and King of Canaan; and they had no power to alienate it. David adopts this language, and urges it as a reason why the sufferings which he endured should be alleviated: because he could, at the longest, live but a short time, he entreats that he might be freed from distress, and enjoy peace and cheerfulness. There is here no explicit

13 Spare me, that I may be revived;
Before I go hence, and be no more.

PSALM XL.

No Christian interpreter can, with consistency, apply this Psalm to any other person but the Messiah. It is entirely descriptive of him, and great torture must be inflicted on it to wrest it to any other purpose. The time when it was written is unknown to us, as there is nothing in it which gives any indication on the subject. David was the inspired writer: and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews supplies us with a clue to the just interpretation of it. He quotes four verses of it, (chap. x. 5—8,) with a direct application to Christ; nor is there the least reason to suppose that this is done by allusion, accommodation, or any other principle, but that of a direct and designed prophecy.

The words of the Psalm are delivered in the person of the divine Redeemer. He recounts his overwhelming afflictions, his submission to God, his reliance on divine protection, and his fervent zeal for the glory of God, and for the salvation of his people. He proclaims the insufficiency of the sacrifices of the law to make atonement for human guilt; and the purposes of God, in agreement with which he took upon himself the office of a Saviour. He speaks of the inexpressible satisfaction with which he discharged the requirements of his assumed character; and addresses the most fervent and importunate supplications, for support and deliverance, to Him who was able to save him. A comparison of this Psalm with the sixteenth, and with the twenty-second, will throw no small degree of light upon them all; and afford a strong confirmation of the principle of interpretation which is here adopted.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. A PSALM OF DAVID.

1 I AM waiting patiently for Jehovah,
For he will incline his ear to me, and hearken to my cry.

avowal of hope in a future condition of blessedness; yet there is a tacit intimation of it, since the servants of God would have entertained a narrow view indeed of God's gracious intentions towards them, if they were to be confined to this short, transient, often painful, and always unsatisfactory state. "They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth;" for, "they desire a better country, that is a heavenly; wherefore God is

not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city." Heb. xi. 13, 16.

PSALM XL.

1. *I am waiting, &c.*—The time to which we may most properly ascribe the uttering of these words is that, when the blessed Redeemer had in view the near prospect of his final and most severe sufferings; the time when he said to his adversaries, "this is your hour, and the

2 He will bring me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay ;

He will set my feet upon a rock, and establish my goings.

3 He will also put a new song into my mouth, praise to our God.

Many will see it, and fear, and trust in Jehovah.

4 Blessed is the man who maketh Jehovah his trust ;

And regardeth not the proud, nor those who turn away after lies.

5 Many, O Jehovah ! my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done :

Even thy purposes which have respect to us :

No one has arranged them for thee :

Should I declare and speak, they are more than can be numbered.

6 Sacrifice and offering thou desirest not ;

My ears hast thou opened :

Burnt-offering, and sin-offering, thou requirest not ;

7 I said then, Lo ! I come,

In the volume of the book it is written of me :

power of darkness." Luke xxii. 53. He had then before him "the pit of destruction, and the miry clay;" the utmost efforts of men and of infernal powers were now to be endured by him; a struggle, the grievousness of which he had a full perception of, but from which he was fully assured the favour of his heavenly Father would rescue him. In this situation we may conceive of him as giving utterance to these words, "I am patiently waiting for Jehovah." After which he proceeds to express his confident belief that he should rise superior to all his foes and sorrows.

3. *Many will see, &c.*—*Vide* Psalm xxii. 27.

4. *Regardeth not the proud, &c.*—The natural application of these words is, to those arrogant, unprincipled, and supercilious priests and rulers, who refused to listen to Christ's claims and admonitions, and who stirred up the ignorant and he-sotted multitudes to clamour for his crucifixion.

5. *Many, O Jehovah !*—The principle of interpretation which is here followed

leads us to explain this passage of the stupendous means which were employed to effect human redemption, in a manner that should correspond with God's infinite rectitude and benevolence, and with his eternal decrees in reference to it. In speaking of this topic, our blessed Saviour classes his people with himself, as the parties to whom the Most High disclosed these wonders of his manifold wisdom and love.

6. *Sacrifice and offering.*—On these words the apostle Paul remarks, (Heb. x. 5,) "Wherefore, when he cometh into the world he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou desirest not." The inutility and inefficacy of the sacrifices of the law are here strongly asserted; and that, on this account, a better and more costly sacrifice was requisite, as "without shedding of blood there is no remission," and as "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." Heb. x.

7. *In the volume of the book.*—This is a periphrasis for "book." What book is meant is not quite so clear. Dathe

- 8 I delight to do thy will, O my God !
Yea thy law is within my heart.
- 9 I have proclaimed righteousness in the great assembly :
Lo ! I have put no restraint on my lips, O Jehovah ! thou knowest.
- 10 I have not hidden thy righteousness within my heart :
I have declared thy faithfulness, and thy salvation :
I have not concealed thy loving-kindness,
Nor thy truth, from the great assembly.
- 11 Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O Jehovah !
Let thy loving-kindness, and thy truth, evermore preserve me :
- 12 For innumerable troubles encompass me :
My calamities take such hold of me, that I cannot look up :
They are more than the hairs of my head :
Therefore my heart faileth me.
- 13 Be pleased, O Jehovah ! to deliver me :
O Jehovah ! make haste to help me.
- 14 Let them be ashamed, and confounded together,
Who seek my life, to destroy it :
Let them be driven backward, and put to shame,
That wish me evil.
- 15 Let them be desolate for a recompense of their shameful conduct,
Who say concerning me, aha ! aha !
- 16 Let all those who seek thee rejoice, and exult in thee :
Let such as love thy salvation, evermore say,
May Jehovah be magnified !
- 17 As for me, I am afflicted, and destitute ; the Lord regardeth me :
Thou art my help, and my deliverer ;
Make no delay, O my God !

thinks that the passages in the law of Moses which speak of sacrifices is chiefly meant ; but, though this may possibly be in part intended, I am of opinion that the book here spoken of is the book which contains the divine decrees, and which none but the Lamb could open. Rev. v. 1. In this book was written all that pertains to the glorious Messiah and his immortal deeds.

9. *In the great assembly.*]—This formed a large part of Christ's public ministry, and displayed the riches of his wisdom and knowledge, while it made known the manifold wisdom of God and his moral perfection ; ἡ πολυποικίλος σοφία τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ephes. iii. 10.

12. *My calamities.* English translation, *mine iniquities.*]—*Vide* Additional Notes.

PSALM XLI.

THE commencement of this Psalm has often been supposed to deliver a commendation of alms-giving, or of kind attention to the poor. In this sense it was manifestly taken by the translators of the Authorized Version. No doubt can be raised about the acceptableness of such liberality and compassion, when they arise from proper motives; and it would prove an inestimable advantage, both to the church and the world, if a large measure of these virtues were displayed. But there is good reason to question whether this be the correct notion of the Psalm which now comes before us. It is little, if at all less than certain, that the origin of the Psalm is to be found in the unfeeling and cruel treatment which David experienced, during a season of affliction occasioned by disease, from some persons who had been in habits of friendly and familiar intercourse with him, and from whom he reasonably expected different behaviour; this appears to have inflicted a deep wound upon his feelings. It is not easy to point out any particular instance in David's history when these events took place, as we have but few incidents in his life related, compared with its length, and the multiplicity of occurrences which befel him. Our ignorance on this particular furnishes no obstacle to a satisfactory interpretation of the Psalm. The Psalmist begins his poem by pronouncing an eulogium on those kind and sympathizing persons who are prepared "to weep with them that weep, and to rejoice with them that rejoice."

He then proceeds to give an account of his own affliction, to offer to God supplications for recovery, mingled with lowly confessions of his sinfulness. The false and perfidious conduct of his professed adversaries, and his deceitful friends, are next adverted to; and he concludes, by declaring the special and abundant goodness of God towards him.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 BLESSED is he who sheweth regard to the afflicted :
Jehovah will deliver him in the time of trouble.
- 2 Jehovah will preserve him, and keep him alive :
He will prosper in the land ;
And thou wilt not give him up to the desire of his enemies.
- 3 Jehovah will sustain him on the bed of languishing :
'Thou wilt adjust all his bed in his sickness.

1. *The afflicted.*]—The sense of this word is, "weak, feeble;" it is applicable to debility of health, and to poverty of condition; the context clearly determines us to the former.

3. *Thou wilt adjust all his bed.*]—It is refreshing in sickness to have the bed turned and fresh made, and so God refreshes and relieves his servants in their distresses.

- 4 As for me, I say, O Jehovah ! be merciful to me :
 Heal me, for I have sinned against thee.
- 5 My enemies speak evil concerning me,—
 “ When will he die, and his name perish ? ”
- 6 When one cometh to visit me, he speaketh falsehood :
 His heart storeth up evil to itself ;
 He goeth abroad, and publisheth it.
- 7 All who hate me whisper together against me :
 Against me do they devise evil—
- 8 “ A destructive disease has spread itself over him,
 “ And he so lics, that he will not rise up.”
- 9 Even my intimate friend in whom I confided,
 Who did eat of my bread, lifteth up his heel against me.
- 10 But do thou, O Jehovah ! be merciful to me :
 And raise me up, that I may requite them.
- 11 By this I know that thou favourest me,
 Because my enemy doth not triumph over me.
- 12 But as for me, thou upholdest me, on account of my integrity ;
 Thou settest me evermore before thy face.
- 13 Blessed be Jehovah ! the God of Israel ;
 From everlasting, to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.

PSALM XLII.

THE tenor of this Psalm renders it in the greatest degree probable that it was written by David, though it has no superscription or title. We can scarcely doubt but that it relates to the great distresses in which he was involved by the unnatural behaviour of his son Absalom. In 2 Sam. xvii. 27, we are informed that, after the king had been compelled to fly from Jerusalem and to pass over the river Jordan, his position was fixed at Mahanaim, a town near the foot of

6. *His heart storeth up evil.*]—While he professes to condole with me, he is contemplating my circumstances, in order to frame some tale of slander to be related to my injury when he leaves me.

8. *A destructive disease.* Literally, *A matter of Belial.*]—This is the account to

which they give currency ; they represented him as being smitten with disease on account of his crimes, and so reduced that he could not recover.

12. *Before thy face.*]—Thou evermore keepest me in thy sight, so as to protect and deliver me.

the mountains of Hermon, or Antilibanus, which formed the northern boundary of the Israelitish territory, on the eastern side of the Jordan, which derives its waters from the torrents and streams that come down from this mountainous region.

In this distant district, banished from his metropolis, and exposed to numerous inconveniences, the grief which he most keenly felt was occasioned by his being deprived of the opportunities of attending the public services of the sanctuary; and he pours forth in plaintive accents his ardent attachment to those sacred solemnities. He dwells with melancholy satisfaction on the delight which he had enjoyed from leading the solemn festivals, and utters most impassioned wishes to be restored to these most abundant sources of spiritual consolation. Nothing can exceed the tenderness and feeling with which he labours to raise himself above the sorrows which oppressed him, in the brief soliloquies which he has recorded, and in which he shews himself to be exerting every faculty of his spirit to sustain his faith and hope in God.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. MASCHIL. FOR THE SONS OF KORAH.

- 1 As the deer panteth for the water brooks,
So panteth my soul for thee, O God!
- 2 My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God:
When shall I come, and behold the face of God?
- 3 My tears are my food, day and night,
While they say to me perpetually, Where is thy God?
- 4 Of these things I make mention; I pour out my soul within me,—
“When shall I go in company, and lead the festive multitude
“To the house of God, with the voice of joy, and praise?”
- 5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul! and disquieted within me?
Wait upon God, for I shall yet praise him, for the help of his
presence.
- 6 O my God! my soul is cast down within me;
Wherefore I will remember thee from the land of Jordan,
And of Hermon; from the hill Mizar.

2. *Behold the face of God.*]—A Hebraism for being present at the worship of God, where he displays his glory and imparts his favour to them that worship in spirit and in truth.

5. *The help of his presence.*]—This, like ver. 2, is a Hebrew expression, which denotes the aid that is derived from God's presence and favour. So ver. 11.

6. *From the hill Mizar.*]—It is of little

importance whether the term “Mizar” be taken as a proper name, or, according to its meaning, as “a little hill.” Some of the critics suggest, that David draws a tacit comparison between this small elevation, near to which he was at present encamping, and where he poured forth his mournful complaints, and the hill of Zion, from which he was now expelled.

- 7 Wave calleth upon wave, when thy torrents are roaring :
 All thy breakers and thy billows pass over me.
- 8 In the day, Jehovah commandeth his loving-kindness :
 And by night, a song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life.
- 9 I say to God, My rock, why dost thou forget me ?
 Why do I go mourning for the oppression of the enemy ?
- 10 To the bruising of my bones, my enemies reproach me ;
 While they continually say to me, Where is thy God ?
- 11 Why art thou cast down, O my soul !
 Why art thou disquieted within me ?
 Wait upon God, for I shall yet praise him,
 Who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

PSALM XLIII.

THIS Psalm has been improperly separated from the forty-second, of which it is manifestly a continuation, and so appears to be in forty-six manuscripts.

7. *Wave calleth upon wave, &c.*—There can be no doubt but that the Psalmist derived the images which he here employs from the circumstances of his present abode. He was not very distant from the cataracts or torrents which descended from the lofty mountains of Hermon, or Antilibanus, and which, especially at some seasons of the year, poured down their waters with great noise and rapidity. Every one who has witnessed the roaring impetuosity of mountain streams, will readily understand the allusion. One wave or roll of water rapidly succeeds another; and the vehemence of its course, interrupted by crags and broken rocks, is so great as to produce a tremendous roaring. Deep waters, breakers, and billows are often used as images to express painful calamities and accumulated sorrows; so that the Psalmist draws from the scene which was before him the figures that he employs. *Vide* Psalm xviii. 16; xxxii. 6.

8. *In the day, &c.*—This is a con-

templation upon the divine care and mercy which still attended him in the midst of his sorrows. Thrice happy are those who, when environed by scenes of distress, discern, through the clouds that darken their immediate view, the splendours of that Sun of Righteousness which never sets; and who, in the deepest gloom and solitude of sleepless nights, are cheered by heavenly communications of peace and joy.

10. *To the bruising of my bones.*—There is no authority for the use of the word "sword" in this place; and I have taken, for the sake of perspicuity, some degree of freedom with the prefix **ל**, which cannot strictly be rendered by "to;" the literal meaning is, "in the bruising," but this invests the place with obscurity, so that the reader can scarcely perceive the Psalmist's meaning to be, that the grief which he experienced from the reproaches of his enemies resembled the pain which would have been caused by bruising or breaking his bones.

- 1 BE thou, O God ! my judge, and plead my cause against a merciless people :
 Rescue me from a deceitful and unjust man.
- 2 For thou art God, my helper ; why dost thou cast me off ?
 Why do I go mourning, on account of the oppression of the enemy ?
- 3 Send out thy light and thy truth ; let them lead me :
 Let them bring me to thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles :
- 4 Then shall I go to the altar of God, to God, my exceeding joy :
 Upon the harp will I praise thee, O God ! my God.
- 5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul !
 Why art thou disquieted within me ?
 Wait upon God, for I shall yet praise him,
 Who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

PSALM XLIV.

THE contents of this Psalm shew it to have been composed at some season of public danger and distress, occasioned by the superiority which the enemies of the Jewish people had acquired over them. The Psalm recounts the signal benefits which God had bestowed on the former generations of his people, and contrasts with them the state of humiliation and inferiority to which they were now reduced. It deeply laments the sufferings which were occasioned by the cruel behaviour and blasphemous scorn of their triumphant adversaries, while it asserts their own steadfast adherence to God and to his covenant. It concludes with an affecting description of the misery to which they were reduced, and with most fervent entreaties that God would deliver them from their distressing condition.

We cannot assign this Psalm to any part of the history of David ; and the most probable opinion is that which refers it to the later times of the Jewish church, when they were oppressed by the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes ; and when they displayed an invincible determination to maintain the truth, and to act in consistency with the precepts of their religion, though such a determination exposed them to the utmost indignation and fury of their enemies.

1. *A merciless people.*—The multitudes of all classes who were associated with Absalom, and displayed the most unjust and unfeeling dispositions.

— *A deceitful and unjust man.*—Absalom or Ahitophel.

3. *Send out thy light, &c.*—Thy favour to illuminate my face with joy ; thy faithfulness to thy word and promises, on which thou hast authorized me to depend.

Such appears to me to be the most likely occasion of this Psalm, though this opinion is not free from difficulty, as it is hard to select a period in the history of the Israelites when it could be said, with truth, "we have not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant." I incline, however, to the times of the Maccabees, when the people were greatly reduced, but still manifested a firm determination to keep themselves free from the pollutions of idolatry, and to adhere to the institutions of their great Legislator.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. FOR THE SONG OF KORAH. MASCHIL.

- 1 O God ! we have heard with our ears, our fathers have told us,
The deeds which thou wroughtest in their days, the days of old.
- 2 With thy hand thou didst expel the nations, and plantedst them :
Thou didst afflict the peoples, and cast them out.
- 3 For not by their sword did they get possession of the land ;
Neither did their arm save them ;
But thy right hand, thy arm, and the light of thy countenance ;
Because thou favouredst them :
- 4 Thou art the same, my King !
O God ! command deliverances for Jacob.
- 5 By thy help shall we thrust away our enemies :
By thy name shall we trample on them that rise up against us.
- 6 For in my bow I place no confidence ;
And my sword shall not deliver me.
- 7 For thou dost rescue us from our enemies ;
And puttest to shame them that hate us.
- 8 In God we exult all the day ;
And thy name for ever will we praise. SELAH.
- 9 Verily thou art thrusting us away, and putting us to shame ;
Thou goest not forth with our armies.
- 10 Thou turnest us back from the enemy ;
And they that hate us, plunder for themselves.
- 11 Thou givest us like sheep for food ;
And among the nations thou dispersest us.
- 12 Thou sellest thy people for nothing ;
'Thou art not enriched by their price.

4. *My king.*—The speaker throughout the Psalm is the Church, which accounts for the use of both the singular and plural numbers in different parts.

- 13 Thou makest us an object of reproach to our neighbours ;
 A scorn, and a derision, to those who dwell around us.
- 14 Thou makest us a proverb among the nations ;
 So that the peoples shake their head at us.
- 15 My confusion is perpetually before me ;
 And the shame of my face covereth me,
- 16 On account of the voice of the reproachful, and the blaspheming ;
 On account of the enemy, and the revengeful.
- 17 All this cometh upon us, yet we do not forget thee ;
 Neither do we deal deceitfully with thy covenant.
- 18 Our heart is not turned backward ;
 Nor doth our step decline from thy way.
- 19 Yet thou dost bruise us in the place of brute monsters :
 And thou coverest us with the shadow of death.
- 20 If we forget the name of our God,
 And stretch forth our hands to a strange God,
- 21 Will not God search this out ?
 For he discerneth the secrets of the heart.
- 22 Truly, on thy account, we are killed all the day ;
 We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

17. *Yet we forget thee not.*—We are not acquainted with any part of the history of the Israelites to which the expressions that are here uttered apply with so much truth, as to that in which they were subjected to the cruelty of Antiochus Epiphanes, the king of Syria. This fierce and idolatrous prince was actuated by an inveterate hatred to the laws and religion of the Jews ; and he employed the utmost efforts of his policy and power to induce them to apostatize. Under the severest penalties, he prohibited the worship of Jehovah, the celebration of the sabbath, and other religious festivals, the practice of circumcision, and the whole of the precepts of the Mosaic law. Notwithstanding this dreadful persecution, the greater part of the people steadily adhered to the divine institutions, and refused to comply with the idolatrous acts to which their tormentors would have compelled

them, though they suffered the most dreadful tortures for their non-compliance with the injunctions of their formidable adversaries.

19. *In the place of brute monsters.*—We must understand this, either by supposing that the savage enemies, whose persecutions are spoken of, are depicted by the monsters which they resembled, or that, in consequence of the superior force of their enemies, the people were driven from their homes and places of abode, and compelled to dwell in uncultivated deserts, among the wild beasts which roamed through the wilderness.

22. *As sheep for the slaughter.*—The Apostle Paul alludes to this passage, and applies the language of it, to intimate the dreadful persecutions to which the disciples of Christ were exposed, on account of their faith and profession. Rom. viii. 36.

- 23 Awake ! why sleepest thou, O Jehovah ?
 Awake ! thrust us not away for ever.
- 24 Wherefore dost thou hide thy face ?
 Dost thou forget our affliction and oppression ?
- 25 Truly our soul is bowed down to the dust ;
 Our body adhereth to the earth.
- 26 Arise ! help us, and redeem us, for thy mercy's sake.

PSALM XLV.*

THE exquisite poem which now demands our attention has formed the subject of numerous conjectures, a recital of which would confer little pleasure or advantage. I shall only observe, in relation to these diversities of opinion, that many of the most eminent scholars and divines agree in the interpretation which will here be given. This Psalm is, in the title of it, denominated "A Song of Loves;" and it is supposed by many interpreters to have been composed as an epithalamium, or bridal poem, to celebrate the nuptials of Solomon with the daughter of Pharaoh. That it is an epithalamium may be conceded; but we may well demur to this account of the personages whose union it is said to celebrate. The Apostle Paul applies verses 6 and 7 to the Son of God, and argues his divinity from them. Heb. i. 8, 9. It would be in a high degree preposterous to admit this application, without admitting also that the entire Psalm is applicable to the same glorious King. There is in it nothing characteristic of Solomon, whose reign was singularly peaceful; whereas the King, who here appears, is described as a warlike prince, going forth to battle, in support of truth, and meekness, and righteousness; a progress that is far from being in unison with the prevailing pursuits of Solomon. The attributes that are given to the King, who is the subject of this Psalm, are such as no mortal could appropriate without impious presumption; but which are, in their largest extent, descriptive of Him who is "King of righteousness, and King of peace." The royal bride, whom the sacred poet celebrates, was no daughter of Pharaoh, but the mystic fair one who is spoken of in Rev. xxi. 9: "Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife."—"Her name will be remembered in all generations; her will the people praise for ever and ever."

Who was the writer of this Psalm we have no certain knowledge.

* I beg attention to a remark or two respecting the proper manner of interpreting such allegorical representations as are contained in this and similar compositions in the Bible. It has been stated, that the mystic union between the Messiah, the divine Bridegroom, and his consort, the church, is the immediate subject of the Psalm. We are not, however, to aim at discovering distinct analogies between all the several parts of the description, and the facts or circumstances to which they may seem to be

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. ON SHOSHANNIM, A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT OF SIX STRINGS, SC. A HEXACHORD. FOR THE SONS OF KORAH. MASCHIL. A SONG OF LOVES.

1 My heart is overflowing with a pleasing theme :

I speak of what I have composed, concerning the King.

My tongue is the pen of a skilful writer.

applicable. Such a mode of interpretation is quite remote from the purpose of the allegory, and would be productive, as it often has been, of very gross absurdities; absurdities which deform the beauty and degrade the propriety of the compositions to which they are attached, and which have a direct influence in creating disgust and aversion towards the divine writings which are so ignorantly and fancifully misrepresented. The intention of this Psalm was to depict, by an allegory, the indissoluble union which divine wisdom and love have formed between the Son of God, and all his disciples, of every age and country. The blessed Redeemer is portrayed in the glorious majesty of his oneness with the Father; in his triumphant progress towards the everlasting victory which he will finally achieve, when his church will appear as a spotless bride, in all the dignity and bliss to which her relation to him entitles her; and he himself in all the splendour of his regal office, and of his ineffable perfection and beauty. The church is delineated in beauty and majesty; attired in the richest and most magnificent vestments; and surrounded by an attendance of the greatest dignity and honour; while costly gifts and lowly reverence are presented to her by the most distinguished personages. The duty of the bride towards her august and elevated spouse is suggested; and the felicity of a numerous and honourable progeny is promised to her. The whole is terminated by declarations of the immortal praise and glory that will redound to the illustrious Monarch and Bridegroom.

It has been before observed, that many of the most eminent scholars and interpreters concur in the views that are here given; and I would add, that Rosenmüller, the erudite critic, to whose labours and acumen the writer of the present remarks is indebted for most important aid, in the first edition of his *Scholia*, stated his opinion of this Psalm to be, that it was the work of some captive Jew, written in Persia, to do honour to the sovereign of that empire. From the edition of 1822, which now lies before me, I have great pleasure in copying the following words:—"Sed jam nos pœnitet," &c.; the sense of which is, "But I now regret the holding of this opinion;" and a little further on he adds, "All the parts of this Psalm correspond one with another, if, in agreement with the judgment of the more ancient Hebrews, which the Chaldee interpreter and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews have delivered to us, we state that the virtues and praises of that great King, the Messiah, and, at the same time, the future happiness of the people beloved beyond all others by him, and united to him as a spouse, is celebrated in this poem. Through the whole of the latter part of the Psalm the allegory, a figure so delighted in by the Hebrew prophets, prevails; in which the affection of God towards his people is represented by the image of conjugal love, and is drawn through its various parts and minutest accompaniments. There is no doubt," he adds, "that, among sane interpreters, the Song of Solomon, the subject of which is the same as that of the Psalm which is before us, is ornamented by a continuous allegory."—*Rosenm. Argum. in Psalm XLV.*

1. *My tongue is the pen, &c.*—A trope which the sacred writer entered upon the to express the vigour and delight with prosecution of his purpose.

- 2 Thou art beauteous beyond the sons of men :
Gracefulness is diffused over thy lips ;
For God hath blessed thee for ever.
- 3 Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O thou mighty One !
Thy glory, and thy majesty.
- 4 In thy majesty ride forth successfully ;
For the cause of truth, of clemency, and of righteousness :
And let thy right hand shew thee admirable deeds.
- 5 Thy arrows are sharp : peoples will fall under thee :
They pierce the hearts of the King's enemies.
- 6 Thy throne, O God ! is for ever and ever :
An upright sceptre, is the sceptre of thy kingdom.
- 7 Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest iniquity ;
Wherefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee
With the oil of gladness, above thy associates.
- 8 Myrrh, aloes, and cassia, are all thy garments,
From the palaces of ivory of Armenia, they make thee glad.
- 9 Daughters of kings are among thy honourable women :
At thy right hand is placed the queen, in gold of Ophir.
- 10 Harken, O daughter ! and consider, and incline thy ear,
And forget thy people, and thy father's house :
- 11 Then will the King be enamoured of thy beauty ;
For he is thy Lord, therefore reverence him.
- 12 The daughter of Tyre is present with a gift :
The rich among the people will supplicate thee.

3. *Thy glory, and thy majesty.*—These words are put in apposition with the sword, *sc.* "the word of God," and are significant of the glory which this mighty Prince derived from his invincible power and warlike prowess.

4. *Let thy right hand shew thee admirable deeds.*—The right hand is here personified, to exhibit to the illustrious warrior himself the glorious achievements which it was destined to effect.

5. *They pierce.*—*i. e.* The sharp arrows pierce. The Hebrew has not this verb ; but the sense, according to our idiom, is incomplete without it. The arrows, like the sword, (*ver.* 3,) are the mighty energies of evangelical truth.

7. *Above thy associates.*—*sc.* Above all other monarchs ; or, perhaps, above all those whom thou hast taken into the relation of thy brothers. *Heb.* ii. 17. "The oil of gladness" is a reference to the oriental custom of pouring perfumed unguents on the head and person.

8. *Myrrh, &c.*—The meaning here is, I imagine, that the regal robes were so impregnated with precious and odorous drugs, as not merely to be perfumed by them, but, as it were, incorporated with them.

12. *The daughter of Tyre.*—*sc.* Tyre itself will honour these nuptials, by gifts and presents which accord with her opulence.

- 13 All glorious ! daughter of a King ! within *the palace*,
Her vesture is of embroideries of gold.
- 14 In raiment of needle-work she is conducted to the King :
The virgins, her companions, attending her ; bring her to thee.
- 15 With joy they are conducted ;
And with exultation they come to the palace of the King.
- 16 In the place of thy fathers, will be thy sons,
Whom thou wilt appoint for princes, over all the earth.
- 17 I will celebrate thy name, throughout all ages :
Wherefore the peoples will praise thee, for ever, and ever.

PSALM XLVI.

WE can be at no loss to determine that this beautiful and affecting hymn was written to celebrate some illustrious display of divine power and goodness, which had been afforded to the people of Israel, by which they were rendered victorious over their combined enemies, and were established in a state of peace and security. It is not easy to fix, with certainty, on the precise events to which this Psalm has reference : there is nothing in it to forbid the ascription of it to David, but it is, I think, more likely to belong to the times of Hezekiah, when Sennacherib, the proud Assyrian monarch, was so utterly prostrated by the destruction of his numerous and powerful army. See Isa. xxxvii. There is, however, no necessity for any lengthened consideration of this matter, as the Psalm is perfectly intelligible, and expresses, in most impressive and consolatory terms, the protection which the Most High ever extends to his church, and which he will not fail to exercise, as long as it is his good pleasure for it to abide in the militant condition which he has determined shall precede its final triumph and blessedness. As this portion of the holy Scriptures thus depicts the state and prospects of the church, it may most freely be employed by individual Christians as appropriate to their condition, and adapted to promote, in the most delightful manner, their improvement in faith, and hope, and peace. Let the sentiments of which it is expressive be engraven on our memories and hearts, and we shall possess the sure means of conducting every spiritual conflict to a triumphant conclusion : and though without us, and around us, may be perils, commotions, and strife, we may enjoy within that sacred tranquillity which the blessed Saviour imparts, and which the world can neither give nor take away.

14. *The virgins.*—By these companions of the royal bride, we are probably to understand, the various nations and peoples that are to be converted to the

faith of Christ through the agency of the early christian church, and are to accompany it and share in its felicity and glory.

The poem begins with an expression of the confidence in God which his servants exercise in the most afflictive circumstances: it proceeds to specify the vehement rage of the enemies against whom they had to contend; and terminates with an invitation to contemplate the mighty deeds of the Strength of Israel, and to manifest towards him the deep submission and lowly reverence to which his uncontrollable sovereignty and infinite perfection justly entitle him.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. FOR THE SONS OF KORAH. A SONG UPON ALAMOTH.
SC. AN INSTRUMENT SO DENOMINATED.

- 1 God is our refuge and strength :
A help in trouble, ever present.
- 2 Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed,
Though the mountains be carried into the heart of the seas :
- 3 The waters thereof roar, and are troubled :
The mountains are shaken by their turbulence. SELAH.
- 4 There is a river, whose streams make glad the city of God ;
The sanctuary of the tabernacles of the High God.
- 5 God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved :
God will help her, when the morning dawns.
- 6 The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved ;
He uttered his voice, the earth melted.
- 7 Jehovah of hosts is with us ;
The God of Jacob is our refuge. SELAH.

2. *Though the earth, &c.*]—These expressions may be taken both literally and figuratively. The man who has God for his strength may look with serenity upon the wildest storms and most terrifying convulsions of nature; he is safe: taken as a figure, kingdoms, empires, and states, may be shaken by war, revolution, and every species of public calamity, but he has a refuge and defence.

4. *There is a river, &c.*]—Pains have been taken to shew that "the waters of Shiloah that go softly," (Isa. viii. 6,) a river, or rather brook, in the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem, is intended. But it is more in unison with the figures that precede, and more poetic and affecting in itself, to take the whole as figurative.

Still waters, softly flowing streams, especially when put in contrast with the fearful movements of the ocean, as is the case here, furnish an image of the most soothing character. Isa. xxxiii. 21. "The glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby." When the figure is withdrawn, the sense will be, the greatest empires and most extensive kingdoms are filled with subversion and change, but Jerusalem is tranquil, Zion is at peace.

5. *When the morning dawns.*]—English translation, "and that right early." The Hebrew literally means, "at the appearance of the morning."

- 8 Come ye, behold the works of Jehovah !
 What desolations he maketh in the earth.
- 9 He causeth wars to cease to the ends of the earth :
 He breaketh the bow, and shivereth the spear :
 The chariots he burneth with fire.
- 10 " Desist : and know that I am God :
 " I will be exalted among the nations ;
 " I will be exalted in the earth."
- 11 Jehovah of hosts is with us :
 The God of Jacob is our refuge. SELAH.

PSALM XLVII.

THE sentiments which are comprised in this triumphal hymn, shew that it was composed for some public solemnity, of great importance and interest. The fifth verse leads to a conclusion that the occasion was the elevation of the ark, the symbol of the divine presence. Such a solemnity took place when the ark was brought into the magnificent receptacle which Solomon had constructed for it. 2 Chron. v. Nor can any language be more appropriate to the celebration of such a solemnity than that of which this poem consists. Its purpose is to induce the servants of God, who were enriched by his multiplied benefits, and surrounded by his mighty protection, to render praises of the most elevated devotion to him. The service was to be accompanied by the sounds of various instruments of music : it was probably distributed, so as to be performed in parts, which was undoubtedly the case with many of the Psalms, and was attended, not only by multitudes of the people, but by a concourse of persons of the highest rank and dignity in the country. Ver. 9. The perusal of this hymn of praise can scarcely fail to suggest to us how " comely praise is for the upright ;" with what inexpressible delight it overflows, when offered with the fervency which is due to the Lord of heaven and earth ; and how great must be the satisfaction of knowing that the majestic Sovereign, to whom are presented the lowly adorations and sublime songs of celestial worlds, bows himself to listen to the feeble and broken harmony of terrestrial and mortal voices. May we learn the songs of Zion, though yet in a strange land ; and, ere long, we shall be united with the myriads who celebrate, day and night, without ceasing, " Him first, him last, and without end !"

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. A PSALM FOR THE SONS OF KORAH.

- 1 CLAP your hands, all ye people :
 Shout unto God with the voice of triumph.

- 2 For Jehovah, the High God, is to be venerated :
A great King over all the earth.
- 3 He subdueth the peoples under us,
And the nations beneath our feet.
- 4 He chooseth our inheritance for us,
The excellent land of Jacob, whom he loved.
- 5 God is gone up with a shout,
Jehovah with the sound of the trumpet.
- 6 Sing praises unto God, sing praises ;
Sing praises unto our King, sing praises :
- 7 For God is King of all the earth ;
Sing praises with understanding.
- 8 God reigneth over the nations :
God sitteth on the throne of his holiness.
- 9 The princes of the tribes are gathered together ;
Of the tribes of the God of Abraham.
For the chieftains of the land are God's.
He is greatly exalted !

PSALM XLVIII.

THE events which led to the composition of this Psalm appear to be the singular and extraordinary deliverances which were granted to the people of Judah in the days of Jehoshaphat. A very formidable alliance between various surrounding nations was formed against this pious and religious monarch. The consequence was that he was alarmed, and "set himself to seek the Lord : and his people, the whole of Judah, gathered themselves together to ask help of the Lord." The remarkable incidents which then took place entirely delivered

2. *Is to be venerated.*]—"Terrible," English translation. But this is not the character in which the great King of Israel is here set before his worshippers. The passion which was now to be excited was not that of terror, but of veneration and gratitude. *Vide* Psalm xlv. 4.

4. *The excellent land.*]—*i. e.* The holy land, which God had promised to their ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

5. *God is gone up.*]—This is descrip-

tive of the scene that was displayed when the priests took up the ark to fix it in the sanctuary as its perpetual abode ; an action that was celebrated with most triumphant and reiterated acclamations.

9. *Of the tribes.*]—These princes were the chiefs of each of the tribes. *Vide* Psalm lxviii. 27.

—*The chieftains.* Literally, *the shields.*]—The defenders and protectors of the people.

them from the power of their enemies, and enriched them with a very splendid booty. For "when Jehoshaphat and his people began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten to such an extent, that when Judah looked unto the multitude, they were dead bodies, fallen to the earth, and none escaped. And when Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away the spoil, they found in abundance, riches, and precious jewels, more than they could carry away: and they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much. And the fear of God came upon all those countries, when they heard that the Lord fought against the enemies of Israel. So that the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest round about." Such, in all probability, was the origin of the poem that is now before us, which begins by speaking of the majesty of Jehovah; after which it glances at the beauty and strength of the mountain of Zion; and then briefly enumerates the instances of divine favour which had been displayed towards Jerusalem; with expressions of joy, trust, and confidence in the immutable protection and mercy of the Most High. This God, exclaim the people, is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death! *Vide 2 Chron. xx.*

A SONG. A PSALM FOR THE SONS OF KORAH.

- 1 GREAT is Jehovah, and greatly to be praised,
In the city of our God, the mountain of his holiness.
- 2 Beauteous in elevation, the joy of the land is mount Zion :
On the side of the north is the city of the great King.
- 3 God is known in her palaces for a refuge.
- 4 For lo ! the Kings were assembled ;
They passed by in company :
- 5 They saw, they were straightway amazed ;
They were agitated, they hasted away :
- 6 Trembling seized upon them there,
Pain, like that of a parturient woman ;
- 7 As when an east wind shattereth the ships of Tarshish.

2. *On the side of the north.*—Jerusalem, that is the upper and best part of it, was built on the north side of Mount Zion.—*Reland.*

7. *As when an east wind, &c.*—This verse, as it stands in the English translation, is alone and unconnected. The Hebrew has also this appearance. There is, however, no doubt but that the writer of the Psalm meant to express by it a

similitude; and the particle of similitude, which is used in the preceding verse, is to be understood in this. It is what the critics call an imperfect, or implicit similitude. The author, intending to give a vivid description of the terror which these confederate kings felt, doubles his figure; he first compares it with the pain of female labour; and then with the fearful ruin and terrifying apprehensions which

- 8 As we have heard, so have we seen,
 In the city of Jehovah of hosts, the city of our God :
 God will establish it for ever.
- 9 We meditate upon thy loving-kindness, O God !
 In the midst of thy temple. [the earth.
- 10 Such as thy character, so is thy praise, O God ! to the ends of
 Thy right hand is full of righteousness.
- 11 Let the mountain of Zion rejoice ;
 Let the cities of Judah be glad,
 Because of thy dispensations.
- 12 Encompass Zion, go round about her ;
 Number her towers :
- 13 Attentively consider her fortifications ;
 Enumerate her palaces,
 That ye may recite to the succeeding age.
- 14 For this God is our God, for ever and ever ;
 He will be our guide, even unto death.

PSALM XLIX.

WE have no means in our possession by which we can ascertain the writer, the date, or the occasion of this very remarkable and most interesting Psalm. The subject of which it treats is the utter impotency of riches to deliver those who possess them, or their kindred and friends, from the death to which all men are destined. It describes the egregious folly of men of large possessions who, notwithstanding, place their happiness in the accumulation of wealth, and endeavour to perpetuate the continuance of it among their descendants ; while they flatter themselves that the measures which they employ will preserve their names and memory from oblivion. The Psalm then goes on to contrast with

were occasioned by storms and tempests at sea, when the large and strong ships that were employed for the voyages to Tarshish were shattered in pieces and utterly destroyed.

8. *As we have heard, &c.*—They had been informed by their fathers and ancestors respecting the mighty deeds of Jehovah in favour of his people, in former ages, and now they say, all these wonder-

ful recitals are confirmed and enlarged by what our own eyes have witnessed.

10. *Such as thy character, &c.*—The “name” of God is his all-perfect character, which being illustrated by the extraordinary occurrences that had taken place, produced wonder and admiration even among distant and idolatrous nations. “Their rock is not like our rock, our enemies themselves being judges.”

the prodigious absurdity of such conduct the expectations of good men who possess, in the favour of God, and the hope of a better and more enduring substance than riches can impart, a satisfaction superior to any that can be derived, even from the greatest measure of earthly good. This divine hymn places before us, therefore, an explicit statement of the belief of a future state, which prevailed, at least, among the wise and good of that early age to which its composition certainly belongs; and it is replete with striking sentiments of the most instructive nature, which it would be well for many Christians, too closely attached to the unspeakable vanity of accumulating vast masses of wealth, attentively and deeply to revolve: the more so, as the sacred code of the religion whose name they bear, declares that "the love of money is the root of all evil;" and that "covetousness is an idolatry, that ought not so much as to be named among Christians."

What, however, can furnish a more condemning proof of the little hold which the instructions of the blessed Redeemer, or the clear discoveries of an inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, exert on the faith and active principles of multitudes, in this nominally Christian land, than the slight regard which they pay to discoveries, to which, if their word, in despite of their conduct, might be taken, they give their implicit credence?

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. A PSALM FOR THE SONS OF KORAH.

- 1 HEAR ye this, all peoples :
Hearken, all ye inhabitants of the world :
- 2 Both low, and high,
Rich, and poor, together.
- 3 My mouth shall speak of wisdom :
And the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.
- 4 I will incline my ear to a weighty sentiment ;
I will announce my sagacious saying, upon the harp.
- 5 Why should I be afraid in the days of calamity ;
When the injustice of my treacherous foes surroundeth me ?

4. *I will incline my ear, &c.*]—The sacred writer introduces the subject which it was his intention to discuss with great solemnity, as one which it was most important to all men attentively to consider; and he here expresses the sense which he himself felt of paying the most serious regard to it; therefore he says, I will incline my ear to it, as a subject in which I am deeply interested; he then intimates his design of conveying the instruction which he had to communicate,

by terms so arranged in metrical order, as to admit of their being sung in conjunction with instrumental music: "I will announce my sagacious saying upon the harp."

5. *Why should I be afraid, &c.*]—The Psalmist now advances to the interesting subjects to which he had adverted. He intimates that he was exposed to suffering from the treacherous behaviour of persons who surrounded him; men who gloried in their wealth and worldly consideration,

- 6 They who confide in their wealth,
And boast themselves in the abundance of their riches,
7 No one can, by any means, deliver another ;
Nor give to God a ransom for him.
8 For the price of their life is of great value ;
And can never be acquired.
9 No one can, therefore, live perpetually,
So as not to behold corruption.
10 For we see wise men that they die ;
The fool, and the brutish, also perish,
And leave their substance to others.
11 Their secret imagination is that their houses are for ever :
That their habitations are from age to age :
That their names will be celebrated in the earth.
12 Yet man continueth not in honour :
He resembleth the beasts that perish.
13 This, which is their custom, is their folly ;
And their descendants acquiesce in their maxims. SELAH.
14 Like sheep they are laid in Hades, death feedeth upon them ;
And the righteous will have dominion over them, in the
morning :
Their beauty wasteth away, Hades is their habitation.

while they set at nought all restraints derived from the mutability of human possessions, and the certainty that death would strip them of all in which they made their happiness to consist. He strongly expresses his belief that there was no real occasion of fear from such men, so long as he placed his confidence in God, and carried his views beyond the narrow limits of this mortal scene. The reader will perceive the difference between the common version and that which is here adopted. For the reason of this, *vide* Additional Notes.

6. *They who confide in their wealth.*—These were the men to whose machinations he was subjected, and he goes on to enumerate the instances of their folly and their impotence, in order to shew how little they were to be feared.

12. *Yet man, &c.*—Though they thus vainly aim at a fancied immortality by the splendid edifices which they erect, and other various methods which they adopt to render themselves famous in the world, yet they die like brute beasts ; nor can their wealth or dignity screen them from the stroke of Him who is, emphatically in such cases, “ the king of terrors.”

14. *Will have dominion over them, in the morning.*—The note of Dathe on these words is, “ in the morning, *h. e.* at the time of judgment, because trials and judgments take place among men in the morning. There is in this and the following verse a pregnant indication of the knowledge (*sc.* possessed by the writer of the Psalm,) of the different condition of good and bad men in another life.”

- 15 But God will rescue me from the power of Hades :
Surely he will receive me with favour. SELAH.
- 16 Fear not thou, when any one becometh rich ;
When the glory of his house increaseth.
- 17 For at his death he can take nothing away ;
His glory will not descend after him.
- 18 Though while he lived, he accounted himself happy ; [self,
And though men may praise thee, when thou takest care of thy-
- 19 Thou shalt go to the abode of thy fathers,
Who will never behold the light.
- 20 Man that is in honour, but who hath no discernment,
Resembleth the beasts that perish.

PSALM L.

THE ode to which our attention is now called furnishes a signal instance of the sublime and magnificent character which reigns throughout many of these sacred and precious remains of ancient and inspired lore. It is constructed on the plan of a dramatic performance ; the sole actor in which is the Lord of heaven and earth ; the audience is the vast assemblage of the inhabitants of the world ; and the scenery, clouds, darkness, consuming flames—the symbols of that almighty righteousness and majesty which were now to be displayed. Both the diction and the sentiments are of the highest order of poetic writing ; and the moral and religious purposes for which it was composed are as remarkable for truth and grandeur, as the style and ornaments by which they are accompanied are affecting and sublime. The design of the Psalm was, to inculcate a

15. *God will rescue me, &c.*]—Here the Psalmist brings out the conclusion at which his interrogation (ver. 5) aimed. It is as if he had said, I have no reason to be afraid of these proud men, for I shall finally triumph over them. The word which is rendered in the English Bible “my soul,” is here represented by “me,” because it is far from being certain that this term, in the Old Testament, ever means the intellectual immaterial spirit ; in addition to which, it is to be remarked, that the version here given comes to the same thing, because it

includes the whole man ; and besides, this term is very often used as a periphrasis for the personal pronoun. *Vide* Note in Psalm xvi. 10.

18. *May praise thee.*]—There is here a change made from the oblique to the direct form of speech, by which the writer turns himself to the rich man who prospers in the world, and says to him, Though you now count yourself happy, and meet with applause from persons of a character resembling your own, yet you shall go to the abode of your fathers, who will never behold the light.

lesson which mankind in all ages have been slow to learn, that no observance of religious rites, no splendour of ceremonies, no accumulation of sacrifices, nor any outward appearances of sanctity, can atone for the absence of inward piety and the exercise of pure and holy affections towards the blessed God. At the opening of the solemn announcement, the mighty God, Jehovah the King of Israel, is disclosed, seated in unearthly majesty and awful glory on his throne in Zion; whence he summons all the subjects of his kingdom, the descendants of Israel, the persons to whom the Psalm relates; these favoured mortals are called to listen to the majestic accents to which the lips of their eternal Sovereign were about to give utterance. The parties whom he first addresses are the misguided though, in some respects, sincere multitudes, who imagined that when they had complied with the sacrificial and ceremonial precepts of the law, they had accomplished their whole duty, and satisfied the claims which the supreme Legislator had upon them. After this, the language becomes more severe, filled with vehement invectives, and distinct with the utmost marks of displeasure, while the divine Speaker addresses, in stern reproof, the persons who have abounded in almost every period of the ancient church, men who obstinately regarded themselves as the peculiar favourites of heaven, but who were, in truth, the most detestable hypocrites by whom the name of religion has ever been desecrated and profaned. These persons were often of the highest rank, the priests, the princes, the magistrates, and the nobles of the land, whose flagrant avarice, dishonesty, lust, inhumanity, and cruelty, are animadverted upon with unsparing severity, and on whom the inexorable and vindictive judgments of the Most High, the full vials of his indignation, are threatened to be poured.

It is a reflection pregnant with instruction, that so clear and impressive a declaration should have been productive of so little effect, as we know this to have been, in the case of the great majority of the Jewish people. They persisted in their superstition, their hypocrisy, and in the indulgence of the basest passions by which the nature of man can be degraded, and put the finishing hand upon their iniquities by the most enormous instance of impiety that has ever been, or can ever be perpetrated, the betraying and crucifying the Son of God. "Let him that readeth understand."

The Psalm concludes by a description of the only services that are pleasing to God; the services of devout thanksgiving, and of upright, universal, and consistent obedience to the moral and spiritual requirements of his laws.

A PSALM OF ASAPH.

1 THE mighty God, the God Jehovah, speaketh.

He calleth the earth from the rising of the sun to his going down.

TITLE. *A Psalm of Asaph.*]—There appear to have been several persons of this name. The Asaph here meant is probably the son of Berachiah, whom,

with others, David set over the service of song in the house of the Lord. 1 Chron. vi. 39. The same Asaph was the writer of several Psalms. 2 Chron. xxix. 30.

- 2 From Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shineth forth.
 3 Our God is coming, and he will not be silent :
 A fire devoureth before him ;
 And round about him there is a dreadful tempest.
 4 He proclaimeth to the heavens above,
 And to the earth, the judgment of his people.
 5 Gather to me the people whom I have favoured ;
 Who have entered into covenant with me by sacrifice.
 6 The heavens will shew forth his righteousness ;
 For God himself is the Judge. *SELAH.*
 7 Hear, O my people ! and I will speak :
 O Israel ! I will bear witness against thee : God, thy God, am I.
 8 Not on account of thy sacrifices do I reprove thee ;
 Nor of thy burnt-offerings, which have been ever before me.
 9 I will take no bullock out of thy house ;
 Nor he-goats from thy folds ;

2. *The perfection of beauty.*]—Zion was the most sacred and glorious of all mountains. Psalm xlvi. 2. It was the favoured residence of Jehovah, the place whence he issued his commands and signified his will. The Psalm is one of the instances in which God thus made known his pleasure, by addressing his people of Israel in the manner that is here intimated. To interpret this passage of the promulgation of the gospel, as is done by Bishop Horne, and other expositors of this book, is, for the sake of a favourite theory, to confound things that are distinct, and to throw obscurity over the whole, by which its specific design is darkened, and the poem deprived of its consistency and unity. The great purpose of the Psalm is, to deliver the judgment of God respecting the Jewish people ; and heaven and earth are summoned, as in Isaiah i. 2, to behold the righteousness of Jehovah, and bear their testimony to it.

3. *Is coming, &c.*]—*sc.* In the scenic representation that is here given, the fire, the cloud, &c., are poetic images to give sublimity to the statement. So Psalm xviii. 7.

4. *His people.*]—*sc.* The Israelites, to whom alone the description applies.

5. *The people whom I have favoured.* English translation, *my saints.*]—The appellation, in this place, is not to mark the moral or religious qualities of the people, as the term “saints” implies, but the privileges and advantages with which God had distinguished them above all other people upon earth ; especially by entering into covenant with them. *Vide* Exod. xxiv. 8.

6. *The heavens will shew forth his righteousness.*]—The heavens are appealed to, ver. 1 ; they are the witnesses of his equitable proceedings, in which they acquiesce : and do, as it were, by their grandeur and excellency, declare the perfection of God their maker, and that, as he is the judge, his decisions must be right.

7. *O Israel !*]—The direct address to the people here begins ; and the charge that is brought against them is, not the deficiency of sacrifice, &c. but of the sincere and spiritual obedience, separate from which all ceremonial observances are worthless.

- 10 For every beast of the forest is mine ;
And the cattle upon a thousand hills.
- 11 I know all the fowls of the mountains ;
And the wild beasts of the field are mine.
- 12 If I were hungry, I would not tell thee :
For the world is mine, and the fulness thereof .
- 13 Will I eat the flesh of bulls ?
Or will I drink the blood of he-goats ?
- 14 Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving ;
And perform thy vows to the High God.
- 15 Call upon me, in the day of trouble,
I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.
- 16 But to the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do,
With declaring my statutes,
And with taking my covenant upon thy lips ?
- 17 For thou hatest instruction,
And castest my commands behind thee.
- 18 When thou seest a thief, thou consentest with him :
And with adulterers thou art a partaker.
- 19 Thy mouth thou givest loose unto evil ;
And thy tongue frameth deceit.
- 20 Thou sittest, and speakest against thy brother ;
Against the son of thy mother, thou utterest calumnies.
- 21 These things thou doest, and I have been silent ;
Thou supposest that I am altogether like thee.
- 22 I will convict thee, and put thy crimes in array before thee.

16. *But to the wicked, &c.*]—It is implied, that though the persons who were addressed in the preceding verses were tainted by superstition and formality, they had not sunk altogether into the deeps of impiety, in which those who are now addressed were overwhelmed. These latter persons had the words of God ever upon their lips, while their hearts were filled with every species of enormous impiety.

19. *Thy mouth.*]—To give the mouth loose to evil, is to take away all restraint

from the tongue, and eagerly to give utterance to falsehood, slander, and every kind of malevolent misrepresentation, to the injury of others.

20. *The son of thy mother.*]—The children of the same mother are more nearly allied than those who descend from one father, but by different mothers; this circumstance is introduced as a heavy aggravation of the inhumanity and cruelty of those persons who spared not to malign and injure their nearest relatives.

- 23 Consider this, now, ye forgetters of God !
 Lest I tear you in pieces, and there be no deliverer.
- 24 He that offereth thanksgiving, glorifieth me :
 And to him that considereth his way,
 Will I shew the salvation of God.

PSALM LI.

THERE is an entire agreement between this Psalm and the title that is prefixed to it. It is needless to recite here the history of the occasion which gave birth to it, as this is to be found at large in 2 Sam. xi. 12. It appears from the record of the transaction, to which I have just referred, that David gratified himself, in freedom from remorse, with his ill-gotten pleasures, during nearly the space of a year; when he was roused from his guilty indulgence, and alarmed by a pungent sense of his iniquity, and of the baseness of his conduct, by a divine message, which was conveyed to him through the prophet Nathan. The sentiments which he instantly expressed, shew that, though his piety had been strangely dormant so long, it was not destroyed; and that, notwithstanding his unlimited command of every earthly enjoyment, he was too deeply affected by the consciousness of his aggravated transgressions to derive any delight from them; they were become "flat, stale, and unprofitable." Powerfully affected by the enormity of his guilt, and by the righteous displeasure of God against his accumulated crimes, he did not sink into hopeless despair, nor seek to withdraw himself, like Adam, from the presence of his offended Maker; on the contrary, he adopted, without any delay, the only course by which relief was to be obtained; he instantly betook himself to the riches of divine mercy and compassion; and, in the plaintive poem which is before us, he poured out his deep anguish and his intolerable agony into the bosom of that Sovereign from whom alone he could expect to find deliverance. The Psalm is at once descriptive of the unaffected piety of its author, and at the same time it furnishes, to every succeeding age, a most instructive example of the means, by which only, men, who are oppressed by the intolerable anguish of a wounded spirit may, with the hope of success, seek to find healing for it.

The Psalmist discloses his sad case by impassioned supplications, addressed to God for forgiveness; he utters most lowly confessions of guilt and ill-desert;

23. *Lest I tear you in pieces.*—This is a metaphorical expression, taken from the strength and irresistible fury of a lion, from which the interference of the shepherd can supply no protection, or defence, for his flock.

24. *That considereth his way.*—The person here intended fixes his heart and attention upon the course in which he goes, that it may be directed in agreement with the dictates of truth and rectitude.

and proceeds to implore God's renewed favour towards him, and the gracious influences of his Holy Spirit. He then avows the course by which his thankfulness for mercies so undeserved should express itself, while he utters his full persuasion of the insufficiency of all legal and ceremonial purifications, and declares that the only acceptable services, in such circumstances, consist of sincere regret and humble penitence. We have, therefore, in this penitential exercise of devotion, a pregnant argument to assure us that, under the administration of divine grace, there is no place for despair; be our guilt ever so enormous, our transgressions ever so aggravated, there is yet forgiveness with God. The dispensation of the gospel gives accumulated force to this argument; and we have but to turn to the cross of Christ to learn, that nothing can stand in the way of our peace and safety, if we receive with faith the testimony which issues from that stupendous object, for "God so loved the world as to give his only-begotten Son, that whoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." How extensive or accurate was the knowledge which David had of the only sufficient expiation for human guilt—"the blood of the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world"—I will not undertake to say, as there is no explicit reference to it in the Psalm; but there is the clearest proof that he was well acquainted with the fact, of there being no efficacy in sacrifices and legal offerings, of his having no claim upon divine mercy, resulting from any obedience or righteousness of his own, and he therefore rested his hope upon the sure belief that, though he might not fully perceive the manner of its accomplishment, "God was just, and the justifier of all" such as commit themselves to his covenant and promises.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. A PSALM OF DAVID, WHEN NATHAN THE PROPHET HAD GONE TO HIM IN CONSEQUENCE OF HIS INTERCOURSE WITH BATHSHEBA.

- 1 BE merciful unto me, O God! according to thy loving-kindness :
According to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgression.
- 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity ;
And purify me from my sin :
- 3 For I acknowledge my transgression,
And my sin is evermore before me.
- 4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,

1. *Be merciful, &c.*—David's heart was too full of painful and agitating thoughts to admit of any circumlocutory address: his supplication for mercy hursts forth with the vehement outcry of a wretch who is in fear of perishing. He thinks not of rendering a service to the Most High, but

at once urges his distressed and anxious suit, in the most importunate terms.

4. *Against thee, thee only, &c.*—Some expositors interpret this to mean, "My sin is secret, and unknown to all but to thyself." In such a gloss, I imagine, no right-minded reader will acquiesce.

- And done this evil in thy sight,
 So that thou wilt be justified when thou speakest;
 Thou wilt be pure, when thou condemnest.
- 5 Behold! in iniquity was I shapen;
 And in sin did my mother conceive me.
- 6 Behold! thou favourest truth in the inward parts:
 In the hidden part, therefore, make me to know wisdom.
- 7 Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be pure:
 Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- 8 Cause me to experience joy and gladness;
 That the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.
- 9 Hide thy face from my sin;
 And all my iniquity blot out.
- 10 A pure heart create in me, O God!
 And a stedfast spirit, renew within me.

David's attention was so absorbed by the majesty of God, and the sanctity of his nature and laws, as to be at the time unconscious of all obligations inferior to those which result from relation to him; he loses sight of all mortal considerations, as if no being were in existence besides the Supreme Legislator to whom he speaks. Great as was his guiltiness, in respect of the betrayed and murdered Uriah, and painful as was his remembrance of it, at other times, when he appeared before God, all other considerations vanished from his soul, but those infinite obligations by which he was bound to God, and in comparison with which all others sink into absolute nothingness.

5. *In iniquity was I shapen.*—Great pains have been expended on this passage, to shew that it gives no support to the generally-received and most evident interpretation of it, viz. that the nature of man is depraved, and that sinful tendencies are innate, which universally are productive of sinful actions. *Vide Additional Notes.*

6. *In the hidden part, therefore, make me to know wisdom.*—English Trans. "*Thou shalt make me to know,*" which assuredly is

no necessary sequence of what goes before. The verb is indeed in the future tense, but the usage of Hebrew, as well as of other languages, authorizes its being rendered by the imperative, which gives coherence and propriety to the whole.

7. *Purify me with hyssop, &c.*—The best expositors are of opinion that David, throughout the Psalm, regards himself as a man who was affected by an incurable leprosy; and as hyssop, probably on account of some abstergent qualities which it was thought to possess, was directed to be employed in such cases, (Lev. xiv. 4,) he alludes to this purification, as being emblematical of the forgiveness and divine influence by which alone the soul can be purged from its guilt and impurity. The Psalmist adds the expressive words, "then shall I be whiter than snow," by which he intimates, that the divine forgiveness and cleansing influence are so perfect in their effects, that no taint of impurity, nor the least blemish of iniquity remains, but the soul becomes resplendent in the sanctity which is thus imparted to it.

10. *A pure heart create in me.*—The necessity of regeneration is with great clearness taught in the Old Testament, if not so fully as in the New. Our

- 11 Cast me not away from thy presence ;
And thy Holy Spirit take not from me.
- 12 Restore to me the joy of thy salvation ;
And with a princely spirit sustain me :
- 13 That I may teach transgressors thy way,
And that sinners may be turned unto thee.
- 14 Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God ! God of my salvation ;
That my tongue may sing aloud of thy faithfulness.
- 15 O Lord, open thou my lips ;
Then shall my mouth declare thy praise.
- 16 For thou hast no delight in sacrifice, or I would give it :
In burnt-offering thou hast no pleasure.
- 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit ;
A heart broken and bruised, O God ! thou wilt not despise.

Lord might, therefore, with justice express his surprise, as he does, (John iii. 10,) at the ignorance of Nicodemus on this subject,—“ Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things ? ” Alas ! we may well say, that multitudes, who have been, and are dignified with this appellation, are involved in the same censure. I would willingly avoid all needless crimination, but truth compels me to say here, that a greater ignorance of the state of mankind, and of the instructions of Christianity, cannot be shewn, than by a maintenance of the dogma of what is called baptismal regeneration. Miserable is the state of those deluded persons, who allow themselves either to support so palpably antichristian an error, or build upon it any expectations of divine forgiveness and favour. “ If the blind lead the blind, shall they not both fall into the ditch ? ” Luke vi. 39. David certainly had different conceptions, and he therefore uses the expressive words, “ create and renew ; ” the very language which we find in the New Testament upon the subject. Let us not then ask, like Nicodemus, how can these things be ? but urge with incessant importunity David’s petition for ourselves.

10. *A stedfast spirit.*] — This is more literal than “ a right spirit,” and implies

that there is no stedfastness, either of religious principle or practice, no safeguard against incessant temptation, until the native character be renewed. “ Put off the old man, and be ye renewed in the spirit of your mind : and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” Ephes. iv. 22—24.

12. *With a princely spirit.* English Bible, *With thy free spirit.*]—But there is no sufficient reason or authority for inserting the supplementary word “ thy,” which suggests a sense not in accordance with David’s design. He was so overwhelmed by the consciousness of his extreme iniquity, so broken in spirit, courage, and fortitude, as to feel altogether incompetent to the discharge of his office, as the King of Israel. He therefore addresses this petition to God, in the hope that he would grant to him a renewal of that powerful energy by which he had at first been fitted for an employment so every way unsuitable to his lowly descent, and his employment as a shepherd.

17. *A heart broken and bruised.* Eng. Bible, *A broken and a contrite heart.*]—The term “ contrite ” is become obsolete, in the sense in which it seems to have

- 18 Do good with thy favour to Zion :
 Build thou the walls of Jerusalem.
- 19 Then wilt thou take pleasure in righteous sacrifices,
 Burnt-offering, and whole burnt-offering :
 Then shall they offer bullocks on thy altar.

PSALM LII.

THE readers of the holy Scriptures will instantly recognise, from the title of this Psalm, the events to which it relates: events that have stamped with indelible infamy the author of them; and the ready agent whom he employed to perform those deeds of blood. If we are confounded by the savage ferocity of a prince, who could order the execution of eighty-five persons of most venerable station, for a crime which existed alone in his disturbed imagination, we shall feel disposed to execrate the ruthless villain who could imbrue his hands in the blood of so many innocent victims: and we shall be ready to draw the conclusion, that both Saul and Doeg were prompted to this deed of atrocious

been used by the translators. It is now, I imagine, never used but to express a mental or moral quality, equivalent to meekness, &c. But though David uses the words metaphorically, the sense of "broken and bruised," in this application of them, is that of being deprived of all strength, elevation, and confidence of mind, as a body, which when grievously wounded and bruised, is without strength. "The sacrifices of God," in this verse, mean those which are acceptable to him.

18. *Build thou the walls, &c.*]—A difficulty is made here by some expositors, who observe that neither Zion nor Jerusalem were, during the prosperous reign of David, in such a state as to need such a request as this; and they therefore conjecture that these two verses, 18 and 19, were added to the Psalm by some pious Jew, about the time of the return from the captivity in Babylon, when they were about to rebuild the walls, &c. So Vennema. But it is certain that neither the walls of Jerusalem, nor the public edifices, as the temple, and the royal palace, were completed during David's reign, but that

this was effected by Solomon, some years afterwards. 1 Kings iii. 1. It is further thought to be inconsistent with the former parts of the Psalm, for David to pray that the walls, &c. might be completed, and that burnt-offerings, &c. might be offered, as acceptable services to God, when he had but just before asserted that God took no pleasure in sacrifice. This is an objection to which a complete reply may be made in few words. When David asserts the unacceptableness of sacrifice, his meaning must be restricted to this point, that no sacrifice of animals could procure the forgiveness of iniquity, or make atonement for it: still, as sacrifices were of God's own appointment, and could not be discontinued without a direct disobedience against it, we can easily understand how David would rejoice to offer sacrifices, as testimonies of his gratitude to God, for mercies so great as those, by which he was hoping to be distinguished. This interpretation coincides with that of the illustrious commentator Calvin, though later expositors of great name are opposed to it.

cruelty, not merely by their hatred of David, but by a malevolence almost without parallel, against the ministers of religion, and which rendered conspicuous their contempt and hatred for God himself. It can excite little surprise to find David saying, as he does in the next Psalm, "the fool saith in his heart, there is no God."

We can readily conceive the consternation and anguish with which David would receive the intelligence of this diabolical transaction; and the terror in which he must hold men who thus displayed their inflexible determination to destroy him, and the cause of religion, of which he was the chief defender, together.

At the commencement of the Psalm, the author expostulates in the strongest terms with Doeg, describes his character as being odious for dissimulation, pride, and cruelty; and predicts the judgments of God, which would be inflicted upon him. He then notices the satisfaction which good men would derive from so righteous a distribution; and avows his determination to make God the object of his own confidence for ever.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. A PSALM OF DAVID, WHEN DOEG THE EDMITE CAME AND TOLD SAUL, AND SAID UNTO HIM, DAVID IS GONE TO THE HOUSE OF AHIMELECH.

- 1 WHEREFORE dost thou boast thyself of evil? O mighty inan!
The goodness of God is perpetual.
- 2 Thy tongue deviseth villanies,
Like a sharp razor, thou workest deceitfully.
- 3 Thou lovest evil more than good;
Falsehood more than to speak what is right. SELAH.
- 4 'Thou lovest all destructive words,
O thou deceitful tongue!

1. *The goodness of God is perpetual.*—The antithesis which these words form with the former clause, is expressive of the detestable cruelty of Doeg, when it is seen in its most aggravated shape, as contrasted with the benignity and love of the Almighty God, who alone has the right to destroy, but who extends forbearance and long-suffering, even while man, "Dressed in a little brief authority,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven,
As make the angels weep."

2. *Like a sharp razor.*—The exact application of this simile is not evident at

first sight, and different modes of explaining it have been adopted. It may be taken thus,—as a keen razor removes the hair from the skin almost imperceptibly, so that the operation is complete before it is sensibly perceived, in the same manner a deceitful tongue works its destructive purposes, before the objects of its malevolence are conscious of their danger. If, however, we take the words, "thou workest deceitfully," as being descriptive not of the razor, but of the tongue, the sense will be, that such a tongue is capable of inflicting deep and dreadful wounds, like a sharp razor. In the latter sense it is taken here.

- 5 God will both destroy thee utterly, and bear thee away ;
 He will sweep thee from thy abode ;
 He will root thee out of the land of the living. SELAH.
- 6 Then the righteous shall behold with reverence :
 They shall also make him an object of derision :
- 7 “ Lo ! the man, who made not God his strength ;
 “ But trusted in the abundance of his riches :
 “ Who even became strong in his wickedness.”
- 8 But I shall be like a verdant olive tree, in the house of God :
 My trust is in the mercy of God, for ever and ever.
- 9 I will praise thee for ever, for thou art the doer :
 I will wait on thy name, for it is good, in the sight of thy saints.

PSALM LIII.

THIS Psalm is little more than a repetition of the fourteenth, so that the introduction which is prefixed to that, may be consulted as quite suitable to this.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. ON A WIND INSTRUMENT. MASCHIL. A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 A FOOL saith in his heart, “ there is no God.”
 They are corrupt, they do abominable evil, none doeth good.
- 2 God looketh from heaven upon the children of men,
 To see if there be any that understandeth, that seeketh God.
- 3 They are all gone aside, they are together become polluted ;
 None doeth good, no not one.

8. *Like a verdant olive tree.*]—The Psalmist had, ver. 5, predicted the downfall of this cruel oppressor, and the entire extirpation of his family ; he contrasts with this signal ruin the prosperity for which he was looking, when peacefully seated on the throne of Israel, he should flourish in the possession and enjoyment of all religious blessings, through the

intervention of the divine power, which watched over him, and guarded him against the vile dissimulation and cruelty of his unprincipled enemies.

9. *In the sight of thy saints.*]—*h. e.* It is a pleasing and improving employment to wait upon God, in the appointments of his worship, in union and communion with his faithful servants.

- 4 Have none of the workers of iniquity any understanding ?
 They devour my people as they devour bread :
 They call not upon God.
- 5 There shall they be in great fear, where no fear is ;
 For God will scatter the bones of him who encampeth against thee :
 Thou shalt put them to shame, for God despiseth them.
- 6 O, that from Zion, were the deliverance of Israel !
 When God bringeth back the captivity of his people,
 Jacob will rejoice, Israel will be glad.

PSALM LIV.

WE have a fresh instance of David's habitual piety presented to us in this Psalm. Whatever might be his sorrows or his dangers, he reposed his confidence in divine protection, and thus rose superior to the cares and anxieties by which he must otherwise have been overwhelmed. He thus instructs us, that we may not only rely, in seasons of distress, upon the sure though invisible power of the Almighty, but that it is a property of genuine faith and dependence upon God, to communicate peace and hope to the anxious and disquieted bosom. It should never be forgotten, that the exercise of faith in divine promises pledges the divine assistance ; and that, therefore, the continuance of anxiety is a sure proof of the feebleness of our faith, and an instance of criminal distrust and unbelief in God's fidelity, care, and unremitting watchfulness over his servants.

5. *God will scatter, &c.*—A comparison of this Psalm with the fourteenth will shew that, in other places, there are slight differences between them, but that the chief diversity is in verse 5, where the Israelitish people are assured that they shall eventually triumph over their enemies, because " God will scatter their bones," *i. e.* he will utterly destroy them : and that Israel should put them to shame, on account of God's displeasure against them.

There is no possibility of accounting, with certainty, either for the repetition that has been noticed, or for the variations which occur between these two Psalms : on these subjects the commentators differ

very considerably. It appears to me that the most likely account which can be given is, that at some afflictive period, either the alarm which was occasioned by Sennacherib's invasion, in the days of Hezekiah, which is the opinion of Theodoret, or the captivity under the Babylonish monarchy, the fourteenth Psalm was adapted, by a few alterations to the circumstances of the times ; and that afterwards, when a complete collection of the Psalms, into the order in which they are now found, was made by Ezra, or some of his associates, this, which may be regarded as the second edition of the Psalm, was put into the place which it now occupies.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. ON NEGINOTH, *scil.* STRINGED INSTRUMENTS. MASCHIL.
A PSALM OF DAVID, WHEN THE ZIPHIMS HAD GONE AND SAID TO SAUL, DOTH NOT
DAVID HIDE HIMSELF WITH US?

- 1 SAVE me, O God ! by thy name :
And by thy strength, decide my cause.
- 2 O God ! hear my prayer :
Hearken to the words of my mouth :
- 3 For proud men rise up against me ;
And formidable men seek my life ;
They set not God before them.
- 4 Behold ! God is my helper ;
The Lord is with them that support me.
- 5 He will requite evil to my enemies :
In thy truth cut them off.
- 6 With liberality will I offer sacrifice to thee :
I will praise thy name, O Jehovah ! for it is pleasant.
- 7 For he delivereth me from all affliction :
So that my eye will look upon my enemies.

PSALM LV.

THE whole tenor of this plaintive poem secures us from any mistake in determining the circumstances which gave occasion to its being written. It delineates a condition of danger so imminent, as to leave no doubt that its author was apprehensive of the most fatal consequences to himself; and so pointedly indicates, by characters not to be mistaken, a most intimate and

1. *By thy name.*]—It has been observed on a former Psalm, that by the name of God is meant his perfection, power, and goodness, which are indeed himself.

3. *Proud men.*]—The Chaldee interpreter thus reads, instead of "strangers," a reading which is also found in eight of Kennicott's Codd. So also Psalm lxxxvi. 14. This reading is more agreeable to the truth of the event, because the Ziphims were not strangers,

h. e. foreigners, but inhabitants of the land.

5. *In thy truth.*]—That is, by thy faithfulness in accomplishing the promises which thou hast made to me.

7. *For he delivereth me.*]—*scil.* He has ever done so, and he will continue his favour to me.

— *My eye will look, &c.*]—His intention is, that the overthrow of his adversaries will afford a scene which would be pleasing and satisfactory.

highly-favoured friend, who, without any just cause, was become his most decided and most effective enemy, that we at once recognise the person who is aimed at in the description that is sketched of him. We cannot hesitate to decide, that the individual in question is Ahitophel, David's chief councillor, and his bosom friend; and that the extremely painful situation in which David was placed, originated in the atrocious attempt of an unnatural son to deprive of his crown and life a most tender and indulgent parent. From the accounts which we have of Ahitophel we find, that he was so eminent for professed piety, as to impose upon his royal master by his specious pretences; and so illustrious for the piercing penetration of his mind and judgment, as to be esteemed little inferior to an oracle; yet, his religion was proved to be gross hypocrisy; his discerning policy turned out to be the engine of his ruin and self-murder; and his affection for his sovereign was converted into an enmity so intense, as to prompt him to employ his extraordinary endowments in the suggestion of measures most adapted to insure his ruin and death. Such the wisdom of this world has been often shewn to be! and such are the miserable consequences of dissimulation and treachery in their final issue, that we may well be excited by this brief recital to employ the wise and pious petition which David, on another occasion, offered to God, "Let integrity and uprightness preserve me."

The Psalm begins with an earnest supplication for divine help; it goes on to describe the anguish and terror by which the heart of the writer was agitated; and glances at the unhappy condition of Jerusalem, which was now subjected to the usurped domination of traitors and assassins. The man whose subtle policy was chiefly to be dreaded is then pointed out, and an address is presented to the supreme and righteous dispenser of good and evil, to bring upon him the signal punishment due to his treachery, and that of the persons who had become confederates in his treason. The Psalm then ends with an expression of David's unalterable determination to place his dependence upon God for delivery from such overwhelming distress, and an exhortation to all troubled and afflicted persons to imitate his example, by casting their burdens upon almighty power and faithfulness.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. ON NEGINOTH, STRINGED INSTRUMENTS. MASCHIL.
A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 HEARKEN, O God! to my prayer;
And hide not thyself from my supplication.
- 2 Attend unto me, and answer me:
In my prayer, I make lamentation; I am agitated with tumult,
- 3 Through the voice of the enemy;
On account of the oppression of the wicked;
For they cast iniquity upon me, and with rage they persecute me.

3. *For they cast iniquity upon me.*—sc. are injurious to me. The enemies of David charged him with neglect and They spread abroad false reports which

- 4 My heart is deeply pained within me :
And the terrors of death are falling upon me.
- 5 Fear and trembling come over me ;
And horror is spread around me.
- 6 I say, O ! that I had wings like a dove,
I would fly away, and settle in quietness.
- 7 Lo ! I would wander far distant ;
I would abide in a wilderness. *SELAH.*
- 8 I would hasten and escape for myself,
From the blast of the storm, and of the tempest.
- 9 Destroy them, O Lord ! by dividing their counsels ;
For I behold violence and contention in the city.
- 10 By night and day they go around its walls ;
Iniquity and molestation are within it :
- 11 Villany is in the midst of it ;
Fraud, and deceit depart not from the streets.
- 12 Yet an enemy doth not reproach me, I could bear this :
Nor doth one who hated me, magnify himself against me ;
From such an one I would conceal myself.
- 13 But thou, a man, my associate,
My guide, and my acquaintance.
- 14 We took sweet counsel together ;
We went to the house of God in company.
- 15 Let death suddenly seize them ;
Let them go down alive to Hades :
For wickedness is in the midst of their dwelling.
- 16 As for me, upon God will I call ;
And Jehovah will deliver me.
- 17 Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray ;
I will cry aloud, and he will hear my voice.
- 18 He will redeem me in peace from the battle ;
Though multitudes be in opposition to me.

unfaithfulness, in the discharge of his regal duties. This was done, especially by Absalom, 2 Sam. xv. 3, 4.

6. *I say.*—I speak thus in my heart : this is my secret wish.

9. *Destroy them, &c.*—*Vide* App. No. 1.

9. *I behold.*—It appears, hence, that David was still in Jerusalem : though he was subsequently compelled to fly from it, and to take refuge beyond the Jordan.

18. *Though multitudes be in opposition to me.*—The English Bible has, “ For there

- 19 God will hear, and the Eternal will afflict them. SELAH.
 They have no vicissitudes, therefore they fear not God.
- 20 He layeth his hands on those who were at peace with him :
 He hath violated his covenant.
- 21 Smoother than butter is his mouth, his heart is war :
 Softer than oil his words, but they are drawn swords.
- 22 Commit thy affairs to Jehovah, he will sustain thee ;
 He will not suffer the righteous to be moved.
- 23 For thou, O God ! wilt bring them down to the pit of destruction.
 Men of blood and deceit shall not live half their days :
 But I will confide in thee.

PSALM LVI.

THE earlier parts of David's life were marked by great changes of condition ; yet we find the prevailing dispositions of his heart always the same. Though he was by no means free from human infirmities and the influence of strong passions, which, in one sad instance especially, led him astray, and became a source of painful regret throughout the latter days of his life, still we find his piety surmounting every trial, whether occasioned by infirmity or misfortune. Though he experienced the fluctuations of feeling, and the tendencies of a fallen and sinful state, his predominant affections were placed upon God : God was the source of his dearest delights, and in the unchangeable truth and beneficence of his nature he found the most satisfactory rest and tranquillity. In David's life, faith, hope, and joy in God formed the rule ; sinful allurements and compliances were the exceptions. Several of the eminent persons whose names are illustrious in the annals of the Old Testament, must be regarded as superior to him in the regular undeviating performance of obedience to the will of God ; but there is no one, whose ardent affection for God, and for the enjoyment of his favour, is so conspicuous ; nor any whose entire character

were many with me :'' but this is a statement for which the reader is not prepared, either by the former parts of the Psalm, or by the history of the case to which it relates. The sense which is here given is evidently required, and is fairly deducible from the Hebrew text.

19. *And the Eternal.*]—Literally, He who sitteth of old : *i. e.* from everlasting.

— *They have no vicissitudes.*]—The sense of this clause is somewhat uncertain. The original word means changes, but does not specify of what kind. Some

critics, as Dathe, who follows the Chaldee, though he admits the doubtfulness of it, yet takes it to mean changes or improvements in moral or religious character. But this reduces the passage nearly to an identical proposition : so that the probable meaning is, vicissitudes of fortune. These men had enjoyed great prosperity, and been subjected to few trials ; they were therefore enamoured of this world, and its pleasures ; and gave themselves little regard about the will or authority of God. So Psalm lxxiii. 5, 6.

has conferred so many encouragements to hope upon his successors, so many incentives to fervent thankfulness and love, as that of the sweet singer of Israel.

In the Psalm which now comes before us, we meet with him in deep distress, apparently forsaken by God and man; a wandering exile, expelled from his native land, and compelled to feign himself an idiot in order to preserve his life. What were his thoughts and meditations in these unhappy circumstances, we have here a very affecting representation.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. ON JONATH-ELEM-RECHOKIM. MICHAM OF DAVID,
WHEN THE PHILISTINES DISCOVERED HIM IN GATH.

- 1 BE merciful unto me, O God ! for man persecuteth me ;
Fighting continually, he oppresseth me.
- 2 Daily do my enemies persecute me :
Many indeed fight against me proudly.
- 3 In the time when I am alarmed, I will trust in thee.
- 4 In God will I exult, even in his word ; in God is my hope ;
I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.
- 5 They continually wrest my words ;
All their thoughts concerning me are for my harm.
- 6 They assemble together secretly ;
They watch my steps, while they wait for my life.
- 7 Shall they escape by iniquity ?
With indignation, bring down the people, O God !
- 8 Thou numberest my wanderings :
Put my tears into thy bottle ; are they not in thy record ?
- 9 Then shall my enemies be turned backward, when I call :
This I know, for God is on my side.
- 10 In God will I exult, even in his word :
In Jehovah will I exult, even in his word.

TITLE. *Jonath-elem-rechokim.*] — The best interpreters take these words to be the beginning of some well-known ode; according to the structure and manner of singing of which, the present Psalm is directed to be managed. *Vide* Dathe, Rosenm. and Winer, *Simon. Lex.*

2. *Proudly.* Eng. Trans. *O thou most High.*] — There is little doubt that the rendering which is here given is the more correct. *Vide* Additional Notes.

4. *In God will I exult.*] — The trans-

lation of this passage is much the same in effect with the common version; but it is more literal and more intelligible. The word that is spoken of is the promise which was made to David, that he should ascend the throne, and reign in prosperity.

5. *They continually wrest my words.*] — Though David was in Gath, among the Philistines, when this was written, the Psalmist means to refer to Saul and his associates throughout the Psalm.

- 11 In God I put my confidence, what can man 'do unto me?
 12 Upon me, O God! are thy vows:
 I will render thanksgiving unto thee.
 13 For thou deliverest me from death;
 Wilt thou not preserve my foot from being cast down,
 That I may walk before God, in the land of the living?

PSALM LVII.

THE character of this Psalm does not materially differ from that of the preceding. Though written upon another occasion, the same reliance on divine protection, the same earnest desire to enjoy the indications of God's favour, and the same fixed and unalterable purpose to celebrate his praise, are displayed. The occasion on which this Psalm was composed is stated in the title to have been an extraordinary deliverance from the power of his enemies, when he made his escape from a cave in which he had taken shelter. In two different instances David resorted to caves, and in both he experienced signal preservation. The latter of these seems to be that to which this Psalm has reference, when he met with Saul in a cave, in the desert of Engedi. 1 Sam. xxiv.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. AL-TASCHITH. MIGHTAM OF DAVID, WHEN HE FLED FROM SAUL IN THE CAVE.

- 1 BE merciful unto me, O God! be merciful unto me.
 For in thee my soul trusteth:
 Under the shadow of thy wings I take refuge,
 Until my calamities pass away.
 2 I call upon God, the high God:
 Upon God, who effectually worketh for me,
 3 That he may send from heaven,
 To save me from the reproach of my persecutor. SELAH.
 God will send forth his mercy and his truth.

12. *Upon me, O God! are thy vows.*—He means the vows which he made in the season of his afflictions, that when he should be rescued, he would present sacrifices, praises, and thanksgivings. By these vows he represents himself as being now bound.

13. *In the land of the living.*—*h. e.* That in possession of consolation and

happiness, I may live in grateful obedience, under a full impression of God's presence and gracious regard.

PSALM LVII.

TITLE. *Al-taschith.*—Probably the first words of some well-known ode. The meaning of them is, "destroy not."

3. *Will send forth his mercy and his*

- 4 My soul is among lions, among flames of fire do I lie ;
The sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows,
And their tongue a sharp sword.
- 5 Be thou exalted, O God ! above the heavens ;
Over all the earth, be thy glory.
- 6 A net they prepare for my steps ; depressed is my soul :
They dig a pit before me, they shall fall into the midst of it.
- SELAH.
- 7 Fixed is my heart, O God ! fixed is my heart ;
I will sing, and give praise.
- 8 Awake my soul, awake lute and harp ;
I will awake with the dawn.
- 9 I will praise thee, O Lord ! among the peoples ;
I will sing unto thee, among the nations.
- 10 For thy mercy is great, even unto the heavens ;
And thy truth unto the skies.
- 11 Be thou exalted, O God ! above the heavens :
Over all the earth, be thy glory.

PSALM LVIII.

THERE is a difference of opinion relative to the time and occasion of the writing of this Psalm. Some of the commentators maintain, that it refers to the time of Saul ; and especially to the period in which the atrocious massacre of the High Priest, Ahimelech, with more than eighty of his brethren in the priesthood, took place, by the hand of Doeg, at Saul's command ; and when the inhabitants of the city in which they dwelt, men, women, and children, with all their cattle, were put to the sword, in one indiscriminate slaughter, by order of the chief magistrate of the land, without even the forms of law or justice. Other expositors think it was composed during Absalom's rebellion, when every thing in the social state was thrown into confusion, and opportunity was given to the lawless and unprincipled, to perpetrate whatever deeds of violence were agreeable to their cruel and savage temper. It is not very material which of these opinions we adopt, but the former appears to me to be the most probable ;

truth.].—The mercy and truth of God, in the fulfilment of his promises, are represented as heralds, sent out to accomplish the safety of David.

10. *Great, even unto the heavens.*].—The divine mercy is so diffused and extensive, as to fill all space, and influence all events.

as the Psalm seems to indicate a more durable state of injustice, and of public licentiousness, than can well be supposed to have taken place during the comparatively short continuance of the anarchy that was occasioned by Absalom's conspiracy. The Psalm consists altogether of an address of the severest kind, delivered to the magistrates, under whose administration equity and good order ought to have prevailed : instead of which, they were themselves the perpetrators of the greatest injustice, and most flagrant crimes. The Psalmist, in a few expressive terms, glances at the conduct of these magistrates, and then depicts, in vivid and appalling words, their real and confirmed character. He goes on to denounce the just judgment of God which would overtake them ; and concludes with expressing the satisfaction which all good and upright persons would derive from such a display of divine justice and equitable remuneration.

Mankind can be favoured by no temporal blessings more distinguished than those which are conferred by the steady and impartial administration of public justice. In the absence of such regulation, the advantages of the social state disappear ; and in their place rapine, murder, and violence of every kind succeed. No habitation is secure ; no property inviolable ; nor can imagination portray a more afflicting condition than that of a nation visited by such a calamity. War, pestilence, and famine, are inferior evils, as they are commonly of shorter duration. A government strong, and based upon the principle of equal freedom, and equal laws, administered by wise, able, and patriotic rulers, is, next to the blessings of true religion, the most excellent of human possessions : and every one, whatever be his station or rank in life, is bound by all considerations of duty and benevolence, to employ his utmost exertions to procure and sustain so invaluable a benefit. No object may, with greater propriety, be proposed to our private and public intercessions, than the security and perpetual enjoyment of such a blessing.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. AL-TASCHITH. MICHAM OF DAVID.

- 1 Do ye indeed speak righteousness ? ye rulers !
Do ye decide uprightly ? ye sons of men !
- 2 Truly with the heart ye work oppression :
Ye exactly adapt the violence of your hands.
- 3 Wicked men are estranged from good, from their birth :
They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies.

1. *Ye rulers.* Eng. Translation, *O congregation.*—The difficulty which attends upon this verse is best met, as it appears to me, in this manner, which is in perfect agreement with the design of the Psalm. *Vide Additional Notes.*

2. *With the heart.*—Their injustice was practised with satisfaction and pleasure.

2. *Ye exactly adapt.*—The original word means to weigh ; that is, to determine with exactness the mischief which they intended to perform. It was all the effect of deliberate and intended villany.

3. *Wicked men are estranged.*—By a series of expressive figures, the native evil of the heart of man, when unchecked by education, or the influence of divine

- 4 Their venom resembleth the venom of a serpent :
They are like a deaf adder, which stoppeth its ear ;
- 5 Which listeneth not to the voice of enchanter's,
Who frame skilfully their incantations.
- 6 O God ! demolish their teeth in their mouths :
The front teeth of the lions force out, O Jehovah !
- 7 Let them be wasted like waters which pass away :
Let them direct their arrows ; they shall be as if cut in pieces.
- 8 Like a snail that dissolveth, let them disappear :
As an abortive birth of woman, they shall not see the sun.
- 9 Before your cooking vessels feel the fuel ;
Both the green and the dry, a whirlwind shall scatter.
- 10 A just man will rejoice when he seeth the vengeance ;
His feet will he wash in the blood of the wicked.
- 11 Then shall it be said, Verily there is a reward for the righteous ;
Verily there is a God, who judgeth in the earth.

PSALM LIX.

THE Psalm which now comes before us relates to the murderous attempt made on David by Saul's direction, when he sent his emissaries to watch him and put him to death. 1 Sam. xix. 11. This is the account which is given in the title of the occasion of the Psalm ; and, though Michaelis, and other critics of name, are of opinion that the Psalm does not correspond with this account, there does not appear to be any sufficient reason why we should abandon it, as it certainly in many particulars agrees well with it.

As the tenor of this Psalm corresponds closely with that of the fifty-sixth, the remarks which are prefixed to it may be referred to, as they are equally applicable to the present. The Psalmist commences with a fervent supplication to God for deliverance from the deadly attempts of his enemies, whose

grace, is here depicted. Wicked men are compared to serpents, to subtle reptiles, whose poison cannot be extracted ; to fierce lions, that rage for prey : and the final end of these men is likened to water, which, when poured abroad, quickly disappears ; to archers, whose weapons are defective and spoiled ; to snails, which rapidly dissolve their very substance ; to

the premature birth of woman ; and to the violent effects of a whirlwind, which sweeps every thing from before it.

10. *His feet will he wash, &c.*—The similitude is taken from fierce battles, in which the effusion of blood is so great, as to moisten the feet of the victors in the conflict. *Vide* Additional Notes on this Psalm.

eagerness to destroy him, and their restless progress up and down the city to effect their purposes, he illustrates by comparing them to hungry hounds in quest of food; and he then concludes, in his usual manner, by committing himself to divine protection, and renewing his solemn intention to offer joyful praises to his almighty Guardian and Protector.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. AL-TASCHITH. MIGHTAM OF DAVID; WHEN SAUL SENT, AND THEY WATCHED THE HOUSE TO KILL HIM.

- 1 DELIVER me from my enemies, O my God !
Defend me against those who rise up in opposition to me.
- 2 Rescue me from the workers of iniquity ;
And from men of blood preserve me.
- 3 For behold ! they lie in wait for me :
The powerful assemble together against me ;
Not through my transgression, or sin, O Jehovah !
- 4 Without fault of mine, they run, and make ready.
Awake thou for my help, and behold.
- 5 Do thou, Jehovah, God of Hosts, the God of Israel,
Awake, to animadvert on all the people :
Shew no mercy to any of these great transgressors. SELAH.
- 6 In the evening they return, they growl like a dog,
And make a circuit about the city.
- 7 Behold ! with their mouths they utter mischief :
Swords are within their lips,—“ For who heareth ?”
- 8 But thou, O Jehovah ! wilt laugh at them !
Thou wilt deride all the people.

4. *They run, and make ready.*]—They make haste to pursue me, and get all things in readiness to accomplish the bloody instructions under which they act.

5. *On all the people.* Eng. Translation, *All the heathen.*]—But we cannot well understand this of the foreign and idolatrous nations, to whom this word is generally applied; for the Psalm has no relation to them. It is not unlikely that the Psalmist uses this word as a term of reproach, significant of the character of these men, who were much more like

heathens than persons who were favoured with divine law and instruction.

6. *In the evening they return.*]—He here describes the ceaseless pursuit of him in which his enemies were engaged: all the day they were seeking him in vain, in more distant places; in the evening they came again into the city, and continued their search, while their execrations and curses resembled the angry howling of a dog.

7. *For who heareth ?*]—This is the observation which these murderers themselves make.

- 9 O thou my strength ! to thee will I sing praise ;
For God is my refuge.
- 10 My merciful God will go before me ;
God will cause me to look upon my enemies.
- 11 Slay them not, lest my people forget :
Send them into exile, by thy power ;
And cast them down, O Lord ! our shield.
- 12 The word of their lips is the sin of their mouth :
Let them be taken in their pride and their cursing,
And in the falsehood which they utter.
- 13 With indignation destroy them ; destroy them, that they may
cease to be.
- Then will men know that God ruleth in Jacob, to the ends of
the earth.
- 14 Let them return in the evening, let them growl like a dog ;
Let them make a circuit about the city.
- 15 Let them wander about for food ;
And let them murmur, when they are not satisfied.
- 16 But I will celebrate thy power :
In the morning will I loudly praise thy mercy ;
For thou art my defence and refuge, in the day of my trouble.
- 17 O thou, my strength ! unto thee will I sing praise :
For God, my merciful God, is my defence.

10. *To look upon my enemies.*]—*h. e.*
With satisfaction and joy at their ruin.

11. *Slay them not.*]—There is an apparent contradiction between this and ver. 13, where he says, “ destroy them.” To obviate this we may read, “ Slay them not yet ;” or we may suppose that the poet, as he proceeded, became more impassioned, and revoked, or did not advert to his former request.

12. *The word of their lips, &c.*]—

The sense of this is, that every word which came from their mouths was evil : nothing but pride, cursing, and falsehood, as follows.

13. *Men will know.*]—They will learn by this righteous example of thy vengeance.

14. *Let them return.*]—The sentiment of ver. 6 is here repeated ; but it is here a taunt, *q. d.* since I am safe under God’s protection, let them go on in their useless course.

PSALM LX.

THERE are some difficulties attendant upon the title of this Psalm, when it is compared with the contents. We naturally expect, after such an inscription, joy, congratulation, and praise for victory; but the Psalmist breaks out into lamentations and bitter complaints: his strains are, however, changed, when he has proceeded as far as ver. 3, where he begins to feel confidence, and to employ the language of exultation and triumph. The best means of removing this discrepancy seems to be by remarking, that the Psalm was written after some of the battles of which mention is made in the title, but that the author does not restrict himself to those events, without taking a wider range, so as to embrace the afflictive condition both of Israel and Judah during the latter part of Saul's life and the former years of David's reign. In the concluding years of Saul the Philistines obtained a superiority over him, and finally destroyed him with his army. Subsequently to these events the whole land was in a very disturbed and agitated condition, arising out of the contentions between the partisans of Saul's family and those who were attached to David. The nations which inhabited the regions adjacent to the land of Canaan were at all times inimical to the Jews, and seized every opportunity of attacking and injuring them. But when David had succeeded in uniting the whole nation under his authority, he proceeded to avenge the injuries and insults that had been inflicted on his countrymen by the Philistines, Edomites, Moabites, and Syrians; and God was pleased to give him signal success in his undertakings. He appears, therefore, to have combined all these transactions, and made them the subject of this Psalm. The ninth and tenth Psalms are probably descriptive of the calamities which resulted from the events to which a reference has now been made.

We can hardly glance at the various and diversified fortunes of the house of Israel, without adverting to their singular and remarkable pertinacity in the crimes and departures from God which were the sources of all their inexpressible adversity and sufferings. So long back as the days of Moses, when they protested their willingness to observe the appointments of the Most High, their want of steadfastness, and their proneness to rebellion and apostasy, were most pathetically deplored by Jehovah himself; "O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever." Deut. v. 29. For want of this constancy and obedience, instead of being the most prosperous of nations, they were the most suffering, and have at length become the basest of people and the most dejected, their very name a term of reproach, and themselves scattered abroad over the face of the earth. Yet their singular preservation amidst inexpressible evils to the present times, while it affords an illustrious example of the infallibility of prophecy, is the ground of a sure expectation, that they shall again be united and brought under one leader and sovereign; for when "the fulness of the Gentiles is come in, all Israel shall be saved." Then will prophecy receive one of its most glorious attestations, when "Jehovah shall set his hand again to recover

the remnant of his people that shall be left; when he will set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah, from the four corners of the earth." Isa. xi. 11, 12.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. ON SHUSHAN-EDUTH: A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT.
MICHAM OF DAVID, WHEN HE STROVE WITH ARAM-NAHARAIM, AND WITH
ARAM-ZOBAB, WHEN JOAB RETURNED AND SMOTE OF EDOM, IN THE VALLEY
OF SALT, TWELVE THOUSAND MEN.

- 1 O GOD! thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us;
Thou hast been displeased: turn thyself to us.
- 2 Thou hast made the earth to tremble, thou hast cloven it asunder:
Heal thou its breaches, for it menaceth ruin.
- 3 Thou hast shewn thy people grievous trouble;
Thou hast made us drink the wine of agitation.
- 4 Grant thou a banner to them that fear thee;
That it may be displayed, for the sake of truth.
- 5 That thy beloved people may be delivered:
Save us by thy right hand, and answer us.
- 6 God hath promised, in agreement with his holiness: I rejoice:
I will apportion Shechem, I will mete out the vale of Succoth.
- 7 Gilead is mine, mine is Manassch;
Ephraim is the safeguard of my head; Judah my sceptre.

TITLE. *Shushan-eduth.*] — A musical instrument. *Vide* Winer. Simon. Lex.

2. *Thou hast made the earth to tremble.*] — A poetic hyperbole, expressive of great conflicts and wars. *Vide* Psalm xviii.

3. *The wine of agitation.*] — The cup and the wine are both used as emblems; on some occasions of prosperity, and on others of adversity, as in this place.

4. *Grant thou a banner.*] — The banner or standard of an army is the object of constant attention to soldiers: so long as it is safe and elevated, so long courage, hope, and energy are maintained. The poet uses this symbol to express his hope that God himself would be the source of their valour and success, in order that "the truth," the promise made to David, might be accomplished.

6. *God hath promised.*] — He has pledged his holy word to be our guardian. The Psalmist next proceeds to detail the fruits of God's assistance, in his victories and prosperity. "I will apportion Shechem, and mete out Succoth." These were districts which had belonged to the successors of Saul, but now formed a part of the territory of David. "Gilead is mine, and Manasseh;" he thus speaks of the tribes against which he had had to contend, but which now submitted to his authority. Ephraim, one of the bravest and most numerous of the tribes, he says, shall be his helmet, the preserver of his head: Judah, which had from the beginning been attached to his person and his cause, and was the chief of all the tribes, he characterises as his sceptre, the symbol of his imperial sway.

- 8 Moab is my washing-basin : over Edom will I hurl my shoe :
Over Philistia will I triumphantly exult.
- 9 Who will lead me into the strong city ?
Who will conduct me against Edom ?
- 10 Wilt not thou, O God ! who didst cast us off ?
Wilt not thou, O God ! go forth with our armies ?
- 11 Grant us relief from trouble ;
For the help of man is vain.
- 12 By the help of God we will act valiantly :
For it is he who trampleth down our enemies.

PSALM LXI.

MANY expositors conclude, from the second verse of this Psalm, that it was written when David was at a distance from Jerusalem, on the eastern side of the Jordan ; where he had been compelled to take up a temporary abode, in this remote part of his kingdom, by the usurpation of Absalom, and the defection of so many of his friends and servants. We cannot, I think, determine with assurance, that this opinion is correct ; nor is there much to be urged against it, as there is so little in the psalm to indicate the time or the place of its being composed. It is evident that the Psalmist was in trouble, out of which, in agreement with his invariable practice, he earnestly prays for deliverance. He calls to remembrance the past mercies of God to him ; he fixes his hopes upon the pledges of God's great goodness which had been granted to him ; and hence draws encouragement to believe that he shall not only be rescued from the affliction by which he was then overshadowed, but that he should be put into the possession of far greater blessings, even " life for evermore." The terms in which he expresses the hope that actuated him with regard to the future, are so emphatic as not to allow the supposition that his views were bounded by the narrow limits of this mortal state ; but that, in imitation of his pious ancestors, he " was looking for a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Happy are they who, like David, employ the sorrows to which they are at present subjected as incentives

8. *Moab is my washing-basin.*] — He comes now to express his triumph over the adversaries of his people, and the contempt in which he held them. Moab, a vile utensil ; Edom, a menial slave, who should perform for him the lowest services.

9. *Who will lead me into the strong city ?*] — Probably Jerusalem is meant,

which David took from the Jebusites, not long after the union of the tribes. 2 Sam. v. 6.

— *Who will conduct me against Edom ?*] — The title appears to be inaccurate with regard to this particular, as Edom was not yet entirely subdued, though David was employing measures for this purpose.

to dependence on God and converse with him; and who, while they are overshadowed by the gloom and darkness of earthly griefs, pierce through these clouds to contemplate the bright radiance of the Sun which never sets, and spring forward with unutterable desire to that world in which "they shall see God!"

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. ON NEGINOTH. A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 HEAR my cry, O God! attend to my prayer.
- 2 From the extremities of the land do I call upon thee,
When my heart is overshadowed with grief.
Set me up upon a rock, that is higher than I.
- 3 For thou art my refuge,
My strong tower, in the presence of my enemy.
- 4 I will dwell through ages in thy tabernacle;
I will take refuge under the shadow of thy wings. SELAH.
- 5 For thou, O God! hearest my vows;
Thou givest me the heritage of those that fear thy name.
- 6 Thou wilt add days to the days of the King;
His years resemble eternity.
- 7 He shall dwell for ever before God:
Mercy and truth prepare thou, that they may preserve him.
- 8 So will I celebrate thy name evermore,
That I may perpetually perform my vows.

PSALM LXII.

THE contents of this Psalm direct us to refer its composition to the days of Saul, during which David was exposed to the malevolent conduct of that monarch, and the incessant endeavours of his courtiers and creatures to deprive him of his character, his honour, and his life. To what express instance of malignity the Psalm relates, it supplies no means of determining, though there is an explicit reference to the unceasing attacks that were directed against its

4. *I will dwell through ages.*] — By bringing together verses 4, 6, 7, we shall see in how strong terms, repeated again and again, the Psalmist delivers his ex-

pectations. It appears to be most unreasonable to restrict these expressive words to the continuance of a few short years upon earth.

author. In the course of his contemplations on the goodness and righteousness of God, and on the hopes which he derived from these sources, David takes occasion to describe the falsehood, profaneness, cruelty, and injustice, which were the characteristic features of his adversaries; and while he indicates the ruin which their iniquities would certainly bring upon them, he addresses various counsels to his friends and countrymen, to induce them to stand aloof from all such courses, and to look for consolation and happiness from God, in whom alone there is a sure support for the hopes of men. Nothing can be more refreshing and delightful than the sentiments which this divine hymn places before its readers.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. TO JEDUTHUN. A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 TRULY my soul waiteth upon God ; from him is my safety ;
- 2 Truly he is my rock, and the author of my safety ;
My strong refuge : I shall not be greatly moved.
- 3 How long will ye direct your attacks against a man ?
Ye will be slain, all of you ;
A bowing wall, a broken fence, ye resemble.
- 4 Their only consultation is to bring him down from his elevation :
They delight in falsehood : with their mouth they bless,
But with their inward part they curse. SELAH.
- 5 My soul ! wait thou only upon God ;
For from him is my expectation.
- 6 Truly he is my rock, and the author of my safety ;
My strong refuge : I shall not be moved.
- 7 In God is my safety, and my honour :
The rock of my strength, my refuge is God.
- 8 Trust in him, O people ! at all times :
Pour out your heart before him : God is our refuge.
- 9 Truly men of low degree are a vanity ;
Men of high degree, a lie ;
When laid in the balance, they are lighter together than a puff of air.

3. *How long will ye direct ? &c.*—The Psalmist alludes to the endeavours of his enemies to effect his ruin: as it is of himself he speaks, both here and in ver. 4. These persons envied his honours, and looked with indignant jealousy upon his popularity, which they hated, in pro-

portion as they knew it to be justly merited.

9. *Lighter than a puff, &c.*—The radical meaning of the term which is here used is "a breath;" and hence it occurs in the first clause of the verse for vanity, *i.e.* that which is as unsubstantial as a mere breath.

- 10 Trust not in oppression, place not a vain hope upon plunder:
Should wealth increase, make it not your heart's delight.
- 11 Once hath God spoken, twice have I heard this,
That strength belongeth unto God.
- 12 With thee also, O Lord ! there is mercy ;
For thou renderest to man according to his work.

PSALM LXIII.

WE are invited by this delightful hymn to observe the truly sublime expressions of David's love to God, and the inexpressible satisfaction which he drew from the contemplation of his infinite excellency and glory. At the time when these effusions of his devotion flowed from his pen, he was in a very dejected condition ; driven by force from his royal residence, secluded from the sacred solemnities in which he found so exquisite an enjoyment, and exposed to the dangers with which his infuriated enemies were menacing him. Yet, at this season of sorrow and difficulty, we behold in him an affecting exemplification of the prophet's words, "thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he hopeth in thee." Isa. xxvi. 3. In such displays of devout and fervent feeling we perceive that real piety has pleasures of the most elevated kind, and that it has power to lift up the soul above all the perturbations of time, and to surround it with an influence altogether celestial and divine. But, in order to make a due estimate of such enjoyment, it is requisite for us to have some participation in it. It is a joy with which a stranger intermeddeth not. It is the effect of clear conceptions of the unrivalled beauty of the divine nature, and of supreme love to it ; it is a visitant which resides only in bosoms that are pure and undefiled by gross affections ; it repudiates every terrene and temporary object of pursuit ; it is the presence of the living God irradiating the soul ; the vivid impression of that seal by which the heirs of life eternal are designated and devoted to the felicities of heaven, and by which they are assured, that the transcendent object of their present delight will disclose to their view his uncreated glory in the state to

10. *Should wealth increase, &c.*—The meaning evidently intended is,—If you should acquire riches by means strictly honourable and legitimate, make them not objects of your supreme delight: for "riches make to themselves wings and fly away."

11. *Once hath God spoken, &c.*—This is a proverbial expression, significant of the full information which he

had obtained on this subject ; so that he needed nothing in addition to it.

12. *For thou renderest, &c.*—The sentiment of these words is, that God will shew his mercy and benignity to those who fear him, by abundantly recompensing whatever they may perform for his service. He ascribes this remuneration to divine mercy, for no man can have any claim of right upon the bounty of the Most High.

which he is conducting them; where they shall partake of the fruit of the tree of life, shall mourn or sorrow no more, because "the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne will lead them to fountains of living water, and God will wipe away all tears from their eyes." Thrice blessed are they who taste of such delights, for they are "the pure in heart who shall see God!"

The Psalm, as the title informs us, was written when David was in the wilderness, in which he was compelled, by Absalom's conspiracy against him, to wander from one encampment to another.

A PSALM OF DAVID. WHEN HE WAS IN THE WILDERNESS OF JUDAH.

- 1 O GOD! thou art my God; early will I seek thee:
My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee,
In a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;
- 2 To see thy power, and thy glory,
As I have seen thee in the sanctuary.
- 3 Because thy loving-kindness is better than life,
My lips shall praise thee.
- 4 Thus will I bless thee while I live;
In thy name will I lift up my hands.
- 5 My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness;
And my mouth shall utter praise, with joyful lips:
- 6 While I remember thee upon my bed,
And during the night-watches meditate on thee.
- 7 For thou art my help;
And under the shadow of thy wings do I rejoice.
- 8 My soul cleaveth closely to thee;
With thy right hand thou sustainest me.
- 9 But they who seek my destruction
Shall go into the lower parts of the earth;
- 10 They shall fall by the sword;
A portion for foxes shall they become.

4. *In thy name, &c.*—The lifting up of the hands is a gesture of worship: to do it in the name of God, is to do it by his authority, and to his praise.

5. *My soul shall be satisfied, &c.*—As rich delicacies are pleasing to the hungry appetite, so the satisfaction derived from divine favour is gratifying to the pure spirit.

6. *The night-watches.*—Among the Hebrews, the night was divided into portions of three or four hours each, which were denominated vigils or watches.

9. *The lower parts.*—*scil.* Hades.

10. *A portion for foxes.*—Their exhumated bodies shall be devoured by wild beasts.

- 11 But the King will rejoice in God :
 Every one that sweareth by him shall exult ;
 But the mouth of such as utter falsehood shall be stopped.

PSALM LXIV.

THE tenor of this Psalm directs us to date its being written at the time when David was living in Saul's court. There is in it little more than a recurrence of the topics which form the subjects of several of the Psalms which have passed under our review. We have the same impious and cruel persecutors ; similar warnings of divine judgment ; and a display of the same sentiments of dependence on God, and hope in his mercy, as we have before witnessed.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 HEAR my voice, O God ! while I pray :
 Preserve my life from the danger which I dread, from my enemies.
 2 Hide me from the secret conclave of the wicked,
 From the assembly of the workers of iniquity ;
 3 Who sharpen their tongue like a sword,
 And direct their arrow,—a bitter speech,
 4 To shoot, in secret places, an innocent man ;
 Suddenly do they shoot, and without fear.
 5 They confirm themselves in speaking evil ;
 They talk of laying snares privily ;
 They say, “ Who will hear them ? ”
 6 They carefully search out some injustice ;

11. *Every one that sweareth by him.*]—*h. e.* by God. The taking of an oath solemnly and truly, is an act of religious worship, by which God is honoured, as the omniscient Judge, and the Searcher of the hearts of men.

PSALM LXIV.

1. *Which I dread.*]—The word “fear” is here used, not for the emotion, but for the object or cause of fear.

4. *An innocent man.*]—David himself, who was free from all blame with regard to Saul and his associates.

6. *They carefully search, &c.*]—They employ all their skill and cunning to frame some injustice or evil against me ; and then they exult and rejoice at the success that has attended their search ; and they exclaim, “ We have accomplished the search, and have formed a deep and profound contrivance.”

- “ We have accomplished the diligent search ! ”
 The inward part of them, and the heart, is profound.
 7 But God will shoot an arrow at them :
 Sudden will be their stroke.
 8 Thus they cause their tongue to fall on themselves :
 Every one who seeth them, will fly away.
 9 Then every man will fear, and relate the doing of God ;
 For his work, will they diligently consider.
 10 The righteous man will rejoice in Jehovah, and hope in him ;
 And all the right-hearted will exult.

PSALM LXV.

WE have no means of determining on what occasion this beautiful hymn was written : there is nothing in the composition itself which throws any light on the subject, nor does the title communicate any information respecting it. The Psalm embraces various general topics, such as may be made the objects of contemplation, without any definite reference to times or circumstances. It begins by an ascription of praise to God, and a declaration of the regard which he extends to the prayers of men. It then affirms the placableness of the divine nature, by which a foundation is laid for men who are conscious of guilt, to approach to the throne of mercy. The subject is then extended so as to embrace the admirable and wonderful effects of the divine energy, both in the dispensations of grace and providence : so that the whole may be characterised as a representation of the grace, power, and exuberant bounties of the Lord of heaven and earth, conducted in such a manner as to inspire its readers with humility, adoration, gratitude, and praise.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. A PSALM OF DAVID. A SONG.

- 1 O God ! for thee there is silent hope, and praise in Zion ;
 And unto thee will every one perform his vow.
 2 O Hearer of prayer ! unto thee will all flesh come.
 3 Iniquities have prevailed against me ;
 As for our transgressions, do thou cover them.

1. *Silent hope.*—*Vide* Addit. Notes.
 2. *Hearer of prayer.*—Men conscious of guilt, weakness, and insufficiency, will be encouraged by thy gracious discoveries

to come near to thee, to seek thy merciful help. Hence he goes on, ver. 3, “ iniquities have prevailed ; ” I am feeble, and need thy help.

- 4 Happy are the people whom thou choosest, and bringest near,
That they may inhabit thy courts :
Let us be satisfied with the good of thy house, of thy holy temple.
- 5 Thou answerest us by admirable deeds, in righteousness,
O God ! of our salvation, the hope of all the ends of the earth,
And of the distant seas.
- 6 By his power, he establisheth the mountains :
He is girded with might.
- 7 He appeaseth the roaring of the sea ;
The roaring of its waves, and the tumult of the people.
- 8 The dwellers in distant parts reverence thy signs :
The outgoings of the morning and the evening, thou makest to
rejoice.
- 9 Thou superintendest the earth, and makest it to be abundant ;
Thou plentifully enrichest it with the river of God, with fulness
of water :
Thou preparest their corn, for thus thou providest it.
- 10 Watering its furrows, thou penetratest its surface.
Thou dissolvest it with showers; the springing of it thou blessest.
- 11 Thou crownest the year with thy goodness ;
And thy paths drop fatness.
- 12 They drop on the pastures of the wilderness ,
And the hills are girded with gladness.
- 13 The pastures are clothed with flocks ;
The valleys are covered with corn ;
They shout aloud, they sing.

5. *Thou answerest us, &c.*—In fulfilling the prayers of his church, God makes known, by the events which he produces, his power, righteousness, and goodness : it is in this way that he replies, " with righteousness," *i. e.* righteously.

8. *Thy signs.*—Nations most remote from each other behold alike thy works

of creation and providence, which are the signs of thy presence ; nor can they contemplate the events which are thus brought about, without awe and astonishment.

9. *The river of God.*—*h. e.* An oriental periphrasis, for an abundant supply of water. *Schultens.*

PSALM LXVI.

THIS Psalm is anonymous; nor can we, with certainty, determine to what time it relates. Venema refers it to the reign of Hezekiah, and supposes it to celebrate the deliverance which was effected by the destruction of Sennacherib's army. Rudinger is of opinion, that it celebrates the opening of the sacred temple, after the return from Babylon. It must be owned, that we have nothing but conjecture to offer on this subject; yet it appears to me, that the latter of these opinions is the more probable. There is in the language of this Psalm, and in that of the next, which seems to be a production of the same age, an anticipation of more general and universal worship that should be presented to God, than what had taken place in the earlier times of the church: so that we may, I think, interpret it as being significant of the approaching times of the Messiah. The Psalm commences in a manner very suitable to a solemn ceremony at the opening of the temple; of that temple which "the Angel of the Covenant" was soon to grace with his presence. After a solemn exhortation to celebrate the praises of the divine majesty, there is a reference made to the great deliverance out of Egypt; which is followed by declarations of various great afflictions from which the goodness of God had rescued the people of Israel, and by purposes and vows of grateful sacrifices and offerings. One sentiment of deep import is suggested towards the conclusion, which we shall do well to inscribe on our memories and hearts, never to be lost sight of; "Had I regarded iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have heard me."

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. A PSALM. A SONG.

- 1 RAISE a joyous shout unto God, all ye lands!
- 2 Celebrate the glory of his name; make his praise glorious.
- 3 Say ye unto God, how adorable are thy works!
Through the greatness of thy power, thy enemies shall submit to thee.
- 4 All lands shall adore thee; they shall sing unto thee;
They shall celebrate thy name. SELAH.
- 5 Come ye, and behold the works of God,
Admirable in his conduct to the children of men:
- 6 He turned the sea into dry land:
Over the flood they passed on foot:
There we rejoiced in him.
- 7 He ruleth by his power for ever;
His eyes survey the nations:
Let not the rebellious exalt themselves. SELAH.

- 8 Bless our God, ye peoples ! make the report of his power to be heard.
- 9 He supporteth us in life ; he suffereth not our foot to be moved.
- 10 Thou indeed hast tried us, O God !
Thou hast assayed us, like the assay of silver.
- 11 Thou hast brought us into a net ;
Thou hast laid affliction upon our loins.
- 12 Thou hast caused men to ride over our head :
We have come into fire, and into water ;
But thou hast brought us out into a fertile land.
- 13 I will go to thy house with burnt-offerings ;
I will pay to thee my vows,
- 14 Which my lips uttered ;
Even the promise of my mouth, when I was in trouble.
- 15 Burnt-offerings of fatlings will I offer to thee, with incense ;
Rams, oxen, and he-goats will I sacrifice. SELAH.
- 16 Come, all ye that fear God, hearken,
And I will relate what he hath done for me.
- 17 To him with my mouth I called,
And he was extolled by my tongue :
- 18 Had I regarded iniquity in my heart,
The Lord would not have heard me.
- 19 Verily God hath heard ;
He hath listened to the voice of my prayer.
- 20 Blessed be God ! who hath not turned away my prayer,
Nor his mercy from me.
-

PSALM LXVII.

WE may conjecture, from the general tenor of this Psalm, that it was written about the same period as the sixty-sixth. It speaks, in terms that can

12. *Men to ride, &c.*]—An image taken from the victorious pursuit of horsemen, who rush over the field of battle, regardless of the fallen, the dying, and the dead.

15. *With incense.*]—This clause is not to be joined with “rams,” as in English Translation. The burning of incense was a distinct offering from that of animal sacrifices.

scarcely be misunderstood, of a display of God's glory, superior to any that had yet been made; a consummation of the promises which were given from very early times, that all nations should be blessed in the seed of Abraham. We shall, therefore, be justified in interpreting this Psalm as a prayer of the ancient church, that the Messiah, who was to be the Lord of the world and the King of the church, might come in the glory that had been predicted. If the Psalm was composed, as is likely, after the erection of the second temple, it must have been not very distant from the time of Malachi's prophecy; "And the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple; even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years." Mal. iii. 1, 4. The spirit of prophecy had presignified the blessings which were to be conferred on all nations, under the reign of this long-expected Prince; and we may combine with the Psalm the beautiful statement of the prophet Isaiah; "Ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." Isa. lv. 12, 13.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. ON NEGINOTH. A PSALM. A SONG.

- 1 God be merciful to us, and bless us,
And cause his face to shine upon us. SELAH.
- 2 That thy way may be made known upon earth,
Thy saving-health among all nations.
- 3 Let the peoples praise thee, O God!
Let all the peoples praise thee.
- 4 Let the nations be glad, and sing joyously:
For thou wilt judge the peoples righteously:
Over the nations of the earth shalt thou preside. SELAH.
- 5 Let the peoples praise thee, O God!
Let all the peoples praise thee.
- 6 The earth will yield her increase:
God, our God, will bless us.

2. *That thy way, &c.*—The petition here offered is, that the Gospel, God's "way," might be universally spread;—a prayer that is not yet accomplished, but is in progress towards completion. The mention of nations and peoples, all of

them, intimates that the time which is the object of supplication, is the time when God will no longer be the God of the Jews, but of the Gentiles also.

6. *The earth, &c.*—When this period is fully come, blessings, both temporal

7 God will bless us ;

And all the distant regions of the earth will fear him.

PSALM LXVIII.

THIS noble ode was undoubtedly composed for a grand and public solemnity, that was to celebrate the removal of the ark of God. This clearly appears from the commencement of the Psalm, which consists of the express words that Moses had used when this sacred symbol of Jehovah's presence was taken from its place. Numb. x. 35. But it is not so clear what the precise instance of this kind was for which this Psalm was prepared. Many of the expositors, perhaps the greater number, are of opinion, that it was composed for the removal of the ark from the house of Obed-edom to the receptacle which David had provided for it upon Mount Zion ; others think the Psalm more suitable for some service of devotion which took place when David was going forth to war, at the head of his forces, and commanded the ark to accompany him. I entertain little doubt that the former is the more correct opinion, since it harmonizes with every part of the Psalm, which the latter does not, in any satisfactory manner. For the purpose of affording a clear explanation of this admirable but difficult Psalm, I shall divide it into the several parts of which it appears to me to consist. I. The first part occupies the first six verses. This part was sung as the priests were elevating the ark, in order to convey it to the place which was appointed for it, on Mount Zion. In these verses there is a recital of the prayers of the people for victory over their enemies, and of the instances in which God had displayed his gracious and compassionate regard to their ancestors, in seasons of great calamity and suffering. II. The second part commences with ver. 7, and is continued to ver. 14, inclusive. This section comprehends a solemn commemoration of the stupendous deliverance from Egypt, and of the progress of the people through the wilderness, till they were securely settled in the land of Canaan. III. The third part, which begins with ver. 15, and continues to the end of ver. 18, is occupied with a poetical commendation of the surpassing glory and excellence of Mount Zion, which the ark was now ascending ; and where God had determined to fix his permanent abode, as in the metropolis of his kingdom. IV. A fourth part commences at ver. 19, and may be extended to the close of the Psalm ; though various related topics are comprehended in it, such as devout acknowledgments of the favour of God towards his people ; an account of the order in which the procession that accompanied the ark was arranged ; and predictions, significant of the coming prosperity of the kingdom. The whole is terminated by ascriptions of praise and honour to God.

and spiritual, will be diffused, in ample abundance, over the earth. May we not say in reference to it, "Come, Lord Jesus! come quickly?"

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. A PSALM OF DAVID. A SONG.

- 1 LET God arise ! let his enemies be scattered :
Let them also that hate him, flee before him.
- 2 As smoke is dissipated, dissipate them :
As wax melteth at the fire, let the wicked perish at the presence
of God.
- 3 But let the righteous be glad ; let them rejoice before God :
Let them rejoice, even with exultation.
- 4 Sing ye to God ! celebrate his name :
Prepare a way for him who rideth through the deserts :
Jah is his name ; exult ye also before him.
- 5 A father of orphans, a vindicator of widows,
Is God, in his holy habitation.
- 6 God causeth the solitary to dwell in families :
He bringeth forth them that are bound, into a prosperous state ;
But rebels inhabit the arid desert.
- 7 O God ! when thou didst go before thy people,
When thou didst march through the wilderness ; SELAH :
- 8 The earth trembled, the heavens dropped, at the presence of God :
This Sinai, at the presence of God, the God of Israel.

1. *Let God arise.*—See Numb. x. 35. "When the ark set forward, Moses said, Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee."

2. *Let the wicked perish.*—These are the enemies of Israel; the descendants of the Canaanites, and the surrounding nations, all devoted to the grossest idolatries and the vilest crimes.

4. *Prepare a way, &c.*—The imagery is borrowed from the custom of Eastern princes, who sent pioneers before their armies, to reduce the hills, and carry raised roads through the valleys, to facilitate their progress. God is described as riding through the deserts, from his having accompanied Israel through the wilderness, to conduct them to Canaan.

— *Jah.*—This name is an abbrevi-

ation of Jehovah; and is used only in solemn forms of speech.

6. *Causeth the solitary.*—The special reference of this is to God's leading his people from their dreary abode in the deserts, to "the land of milk and honey," in which he fixed their permanent residence.

— *But rebels.*—This was the case when the disobedient and rebellious Israelites were doomed, for their crimes, to wander in the wilderness for forty years.

7. *O God.*—Here there probably took place a distinct movement of the ark, and of the accompanying procession and pomp.

8. *The earth trembled.*—*scil.* Sinai, and the vicinity. The heavens poured down torrents, as though they were dissolving.

- 9 A plentiful rain thou, O God ! didst send upon thy inheritance :
When it was exhausted, thou didst refresh it :
- 10 Thy people settled in it :—through thy goodness,
O God ! thou didst provide for the distressed.
- 11 The Lord performed the promise :
A numerous band of females chanted the triumph.
- 12 “ Kings of armies did fly ; they did fly :
“ And she that continued at home divided the spoil.
- 13 “ Though ye have lain among the fire-ranges, [verdant gold.
“ Ye resemble the wings of a dove, silvered, and her feathers of
- 14 “ When the Almighty scattered kings in the land,
“ There was splendour instead of thick darkness.”
- 15 Is the mountain of Basan the mountain of God ?
A mountain of many summits, is the mountain of Basan.

9. *A plentiful rain.*]—This passage relates to Canaan ; a land over which God peculiarly watched, so as to enrich it with his blessing. Here the people of Israel ceased from their wanderings, and gained a settled and happy abode.

10. *The distressed.*]—The wandering, wearied Israelites.

11. *The promise.*]—*scil.* Of bringing his people to Canaan. Then there were triumphant rejoicings ; and, according to the custom of the Hebrews, companies of females celebrated the glorious event. *Vide* Exod. xv. 20. The verses 12, 13, 14, seem to be the words which they used.

12. *Kings of armies, &c.*]—This relates to the dread which fell on the surrounding nations, occasioned by the victorious and miraculous progress of the Israelites.

— *She that continued at home.*]—The women, who did not go forth to battle, yet received the spoils that were captured from the foes.

13. *Though ye have lain, &c.*]—This and the next verse are extremely obscure, and expositors differ greatly in translating and interpreting them. What is here given, after much hesitation, appears to me to be the probable meaning. In this verse there are two images used to describe the afflicted condition of the

people in Egypt, and their subsequent honours and prosperity. They are, in the first case, represented by the squalid and disgusting appearance of persons employed in menial occupations ; and in the next by the beautiful plumage of a dove, silvery, and shaded with golden-coloured shoots. A striking and most poetic exemplification !

14. *Instead of thick darkness.* English Trans. *It was white as snow in Salmon.*]—The Hebrew text literally means, “ It snowed in Salmon.” Of this, however, it is next to impossible to make any sense ; I have therefore translated the passage so as to give some intelligible meaning, without entirely departing from the figurative language of the original. The purpose of this verse so translated, is, like that of ver. 13, to contrast the happiness of the people when settled in Canaan, with their former dejected condition. *Vide* Additional Notes.

15. *Is the mountain of Basan, &c.*]—The Psalmist, in this highly figured passage, represents the lofty mountains on the eastern side of the Jordan, as being envious of the distinction that was given to the hill of Zion, an inferior elevation, and as putting forth a superior claim. But to this claim the Poet replies, “ The

- 16 Why are ye envious ! ye mountains of many summits ?
 This is the mountain where God desireth to dwell :
 Jehovah will assuredly inhabit it for ever.
- 17 The chariots of God are myriads ; thousands reiterated !
 The Lord is among them, in the sanctuary, O Sinai !
- 18 Thou ascendest on high ; thou leadest victors captive ;
 Thou receivest gifts among men, even among rebels ;
 That thou, Jah, O God ! mayest dwell with us.
- 19 Blessed be the Lord ! from day to day : [SELAH.
 He relieveth us from our burdens ; he is the God of our salvation.
- 20 This, our God, is the God of salvation ;
 And to Jehovah, the Lord, belong the issues of death.
- 21 But God will smite the head of his enemies,
 The hairy crown of him that walketh in his iniquities.
- 22 The Lord saith, I will bring back from Basan,
 I will bring them back, from the abyss of the sea ;

mountain where God desireth to dwell is Zion ;" all contest, therefore, is at an end. for God has resolved to make Zion his perpetual abode. Opposition is as vain as it is unreasonable.

17. *The chariots of God, &c.*—We have, in this place, a direct reference to the glorious and awful descent of Jehovah, with the visible accompaniments of his majesty, upon Mount Sinai, when he had brought the people from Egypt. He was now proceeding to fix his permanent abode on Mount Zion, which would thus be made more illustrious than either Sinai, where his presence was but temporary, or those loftier and vaster mountains of Basan, to which a reference had just been made. In this verse, the Psalmist glances at the visible display which took place upon Sinai, and the magnificent attendance which then surrounded the descending Deity ; and now, he says, the same glorious retinue waits upon Jehovah, though unseen, while he himself is in the midst, in order to render Zion the most illustrious of all terrestrial hills, by making it his constant abode. This declaration is made in the form of an apostrophe to Sinai, as if it had been

present ; and that mountain is informed, that all the glory by which it had been adorned is now transferred to Zion, "the sanctuary" in which Jehovah delighted to dwell.

18. *Thou ascendest, &c.*—As the ark advanced towards the place where it was to abide, the sacred song proceeds to celebrate the praises of the God of Israel, as the triumphant King, who had subdued his enemies, and brought them prostrate to his feet, where they were presenting their gifts, as a tribute to the mighty Victor ; that with them his people might be enriched, and that his reign might be established in perpetual and undisturbed glory and felicity.

20. *The issues of death.*—God alone is able to prolong the life and welfare of his servants ; and he only has the power and right to employ death to invade and destroy his enemies.

22. *I will bring them back, &c.*—It is evident from the next verse, that the persons who are here meant are the enemies of God and of his people ; because the purpose for which they were to be brought was, that his people might completely triumph over them, in their utter slaughter

- 23 That thou mayest strike thy foot in blood, [thy enemies.
And that the tongue of thy dogs may drink of the blood of all
24 Thy steps, O God ! are seen ; the steps of my God,
Of my King, in the holy place.
25 The singers precede ; those that play on instruments follow :
In the midst are the virgins, beating the timbrels :
26 In the choirs, they who descend from the fountain of Israel
Are blessing God, the Lord.
27 There is Benjamin the youngest, with their president ;
The princes of Judah, with their company ;
The princes of Zebulun ; the princes of Naphtali.
28 Thy God commandeth thy strength :
Confirm, O God ! what thou hast wrought for us.
29 For the sake of thy palace at Jerusalem,
Kings will bring presents unto thee.
30 Repress thou the beast of the reed ; the company of bulls ;

and destruction. These, he says, I will bring back from Basan, and from the abysses of the sea ; thus referring to the victories that had been gained over the kings of the Canaanites, and the triumph of Israel at the Red Sea. The design of this declaration is, to express the determination of God to bring forth all his enemies to destruction,—be they on the heights of Basan, or in the profoundest depths of the ocean, they shall not escape ; his hand will lay hold upon them, and his power utterly destroy them. In Amos ix. 2, and in Obad. 4, there are two sublime illustrations of the sentiment that is here delivered.

24. *Thy steps are seen, &c.*—The Psalm here adverts to the majestic progress which the King of Zion was making towards his palace, in which he would dwell. It then goes on to describe the several parts of the procession ; “ the singers precede ;” bands of vocal and instrumental music lead, followed by virgins with timbrels : and “ in the choirs,” it remarks, are to be found only the offspring of Israel, the chosen people of God, sounding his praises. Then come the several tribes, with their princes and nobles.

27. *Benjamin the youngest.*—*h. e.* The tribe of Benjamin, the youngest of Jacob’s sons, with their chief at their head : it then specifies the tribes of Judah, Zebulun, and Naphtali ; not as if they were the only tribes present, but as occupying, perhaps, the foremost ranks of the procession, and followed by all the other tribes.

28. *Commandeth thy strength.*—Here the Psalmist inserts a grateful remembrance of all their strength and success being derived from the favour of God ; and a request, that whatever might yet be wanting might be bestowed.

29. *For the sake of thy palace, &c.*—We have here a prediction of the glories that would accrue in future times to the kingdom which God had established in the hands of David. Magnificent gifts, to adorn the palace and the temple, would be brought by the submissive kings of surrounding regions.

30. *Repress thou the beast, &c.*—In this and the next verse the Psalm specifies the triumph, honour, and success that would attend on the establishment of this kingdom. By beasts, bulls, and calves, it represents the chiefs of hostile nations,

With the calves of the peoples, who prostrate themselves with pieces of silver.

Scatter thou the peoples which delight in war.

31 Men of rank will come from Egypt :

Ethiopia will stretch out her hands unto God !

32 Sing, O ye kingdoms of the earth, unto God !

Sing ye praises to the Lord ! SELAH.

33 Who rideth on the heavens, the everlasting heavens :

Behold ! he uttereth his voice, a mighty voice.

34 Ascribe ye mightiness unto God :

His excellency is over Israel ;

His mightiness is in the skies. [tuary,

35 Venerable art thou, O God ! who shewest thyself from thy sanc-

The God of Israel:—he giveth strength and might to the people.

Blessed be God !

PSALM LXIX.

A COMPARISON of this plaintive and most affecting Psalm with the twenty-second, and with the thirty-fifth, will shew that there is a great resemblance between them, and that the same sublime and mysterious topics, the humiliation and exaltation of the Messiah, form the subject of them all. There are several quotations made from this Psalm by the writers of the New Testament, which are applied to our blessed Saviour, and to his sufferings. We are, therefore, prohibited from looking for any other person to whom we may refer the events which are here described. It has been too much the case with the majority of interpreters of those Psalms which relate to the Messiah, to apply them, in the first instance, to David, and to make a secondary application of them to our divine Redeemer. The consequence of this has been to strain and distort the language, in order to make it fit equally both these purposes. There are parts of this Psalm which cannot, without putting extreme force upon them, be rendered applicable to any events with which we are acquainted in David's history. *Vide* verses 4, 9, 20, 21. As no sufficient reason, therefore, can be given for this mode of interpretation, it is here altogether discarded, and the

and their armies, which were to be subjugated : while Egypt and Ethiopia would voluntarily form alliances with Israel, and thus bring themselves under the

protection of the true God. The Psalm then ends with sublime ascriptions of praise to the great author of all these blessings. *Vide* Additional Notes.

entire Psalm is taken as a prophetic representation of Him who was preeminently "a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

The first part of the Psalm, as far as to ver. 29, is a continued recital of the deep distress to which our Lord voluntarily submitted, in obedience to the will of his Father: the remaining verses are expressive of the hopes and expectations which supported him, under the heavy burdens by which he was oppressed.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. ON SHOSHANNIM, A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 SAVE me, O God! for the waters are overwhelming me.
- 2 I sink in deep mire, and there is no standing place:
I am come into deep waters, and the flood floweth over me.
- 3 I am wearied with my exclamation; my throat is parched;
My eyes fail with waiting for my God. [head;
- 4 They who hate me without cause, are more than the hairs of my
My destroyers, my enemies without reason, are powerful;
So that I repay that which I took not away.
- 5 O God! thou knowest my foolishness;
And my iniquities are not hidden from thee.

4. *So that I repay, &c.*]—There is an apparent impropriety in the language of this verse, though the sense is perfectly clear. It is a proverbial expression to mark the injustice and extortion of the enemies that are referred to, who compelled the speaker, without any right, to yield up his goods to persons to whom he was not indebted.

5. *O God! thou knowest my foolishness, &c.*]—These words are most surely not to be taken in what appears to be their natural meaning. The divine Messiah "was holy, harmless, and separate from sinners." Some expositors think, that as the Messiah was a public person, and subjected to pain and death, not for his own sins, but that he might make a sacrifice of expiation for the sins of others, that he speaks of these transgressions which were reckoned to him, as if they were his own personal iniquities. Much more powerful arguments than those which such expositors employ, are required to sustain such an interpretation. It is so utterly alien from the usage of

the Holy Scriptures, that I am persuaded no authority for it can be drawn from this source; no passage of the sacred volume can be produced, in which the sins of men, for whom Christ died, are said to be his own sins. That the Son of God was numbered with transgressors, and that he suffered the curse of the law as if he had been a transgressor, is the current doctrine of revelation: but where shall we find him charged with "foolishness?" where shall we look, in order to discover that his iniquities were "known to God?" The passage, properly taken, contains a strong disavowal of iniquity. The divine Speaker, in every part of the Psalm, protests his innocence; and that the persecutions which he endured were without cause, originating only in the inveterate malignity of his enemies, who dared to charge him with crimes from which he was infinitely remote. He therefore turns away from men, and appeals to God; These men, as if he had said, charge me with atrocious crimes; if I am guilty thou knowest, but thou knowest my perfect

- I also look for a consoler, but there is none ;
 And for comforters, but I find none.
- 21 They even, for my food, give me hemlock ;
 And in my thirst, they make me drink vinegar.
- 22 Let their table before them become a snare,
 And for a recompense ; let it be made a net.
- 23 Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see :
 And make their loins perpetually to shake.
- 24 Pour out thy indignation upon them ;
 And let thy hot displeasure seize them.
- 25 Let their habitation be made desolate :
 In their tents let no one dwell.
- 26 For him whom thou smitest, they persecute ;
 And they take pleasure in the grief of him whom thou woundest.
- 27 Add iniquity to their iniquity :
 And let them not come into thy righteousness.
- 28 Let them be blotted out from the book of the living ;
 And let them not be numbered with the righteous.
- 29 As for me, I am distressed and afflicted ;
 Let thy salvation, O God ! exalt me.
- 30 I will praise the name of God with a song ;
 I will magnify him in my thanksgiving,
- 31 With which Jehovah will be pleased,
 More than with a young bullock that hath horns and hoofs.
- 32 The afflicted will see ; they who seek God will rejoice :
 Your heart shall be revived :

21. *Give me hemlock.*]—This is the translation of Celsius and Michaelis ; Gesenius thinks that the original word may be understood of any poisonous drug.

22. *Let their table before them.*]—That is, for a recompense for their inhumanity and cruelty towards me. Michaelis shews how exactly these comminations were fulfilled in the history of the final siege of Jerusalem by the Romans. Many thousands of the Jews had assembled in the city to eat the paschal lamb, when Titus unexpectedly made an assault upon

them. In this siege the greater part of the inhabitants of Jerusalem miserably perished.

27. *Add iniquity, &c.*]—Let them heap up crime upon crime, till the measure of their iniquities be full, and the just judgment of God overtake them with unparalleled vengeance and destruction.

— *Let them not come into thy righteousness.*]—Let them reap no benefit from thy promises of forgiveness and mercy made to them that seek thee, and which thou righteously and faithfully performest.

- 6 Let not them, O Lord Jehovah of Hosts ! that wait for thee be
ashamed ;
Neither let them, O God of Israel, who seek thee be confounded,
By thy disregard of my trust in thee.
- 7 For on thy account I endure reproach ;
Ignominy covereth my face.
- 8 I am a stranger to my brethren,
And an alien to the sons of my mother.
- 9 For my zeal for thy house is consuming me ;
And the reproaches of them that reproach thee, fall upon me.
- 10 I weep with abstaining from my desire ;
And this is made a subject of reproaches against me.
- 11 I also make sackcloth my clothing ;
And I become a subject of derision for them.
- 12 They who sit in the gate defame me :
I am the song of them that drink inebriating liquor.
- 13 As for me, my prayer is unto thee, O Jehovah !
In a time of favour, O God ! in the abundance of thy mercy,
In the truth of thy salvation, hear me.
- 14 Rescue me from the mire, and let me not sink :
Let me be delivered from them that hate me,
And from the deep waters.
- 15 Let not the water-flood overwhelm me ;
Neither let the deep swallow me up ;
Let not the pit close upon me her mouth.
- 16 Answer me, O Jehovah ! for good is thy mercy :
According to the multitude of thy loving-kindnesses, turn to me.
- 17 Hide not thy face from thy servant, for I am in trouble.
Hasten ! answer me !
- 18 Draw nigh to me, deliver me !
On account of my enemies, rescue me :
- 19 Thou knowest my reproach, my ignominy, and my contumely :
In thy presence are all my enemies.
- 20 Reproach is breaking my heart, and I am deeply afflicted :

innocency : I therefore look to thee for
the vindication of my character, and for

deliverance from my adversaries. *Vide*
Additional Notes.

- 33 Because Jehovah hearkeneth to the afflicted ;
And his prisoners he despiseth not.
- 34 Let the heavens and the earth praise him ;
The seas, and whatever moveth in them.
- 35 For God will save Zion, and he will build the cities of Judah ;
That men may dwell there, and have it in possession.
- 36 The offspring also of his servants shall inherit it ;
And they that love his name shall dwell there.

PSALM LXX.

THIS Psalm, excepting a few verbal differences, is identical with the last five verses of the fortieth. How the repetition is to be accounted for, we have not the means of fully determining. It most probably arose from some mistake of the persons by whom the Psalms were collected and arranged, after the return from the captivity in Babylon. See Explanatory Note on Psalm liii.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. A PSALM OF DAVID. TO BRING TO REMEMBRANCE.

- 1 HASTEN, O God ! to deliver me :
O Jehovah ! for my help.
- 2 Let them be ashamed and confounded, who seek my life ;
Let them be turned backward, and put to confusion,
That wish me evil. [duct,
- 3 Let them be turned back, for a recompense of their shameful con-
Who say, Aha ! Aha !
- 4 Let all those who seek thee, rejoice and exult in thee :
Let such as love thy salvation evermore say,
May God be magnified !
- 5 As for me, I am afflicted and destitute. O God ! hasten to me :
My helper and deliverer art thou, O Jehovah ! make no delay.

35. *Will save Zion.*—As the Psalm is delivered in the person of the Messiah, we must interpret these expressions, not of Zion the mountain, “ which might be touched,” but of the Zion that is spiri-

tual, invisible, and impalpable, on which the “ Lamb standeth, and with him a hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.” Rev. xiv. 1.

PSALM LXXI.

THIS sacred song of praise was most probably composed after the troubles which were occasioned by Absalom's undutiful and impious conduct had passed away. We may draw this conclusion from the language of the Psalm, which is the sole means we have of forming an opinion respecting it. In this, the greater part of the commentators acquiesce. The Psalmist had been engaged in reviewing the events of his life; and he speaks in very affecting terms of the sorrows which he had experienced, and of the extraordinary deliverances which had been afforded to him. The vicissitudes through which he had passed were so strongly marked by divine interference and support, that he says, men looked upon him as a prodigy, a miraculous instance of the presence and guardian care of Heaven over him. He offers most devout acknowledgments of the favour that had been shewn to him; he expresses his fixed purpose to abound in praise; and from a remembrance of past mercy, to trust, without fear, all his future concerns to the same gracious power which had so long sustained him. In the midst of his joy and gratitude, he adverts to the enemies to whose malevolence he was still exposed, and who were ready to embrace any opportunity of working evil against him. In reference to these causes of painful apprehension, he commits himself, and all his ways, to Divine and Almighty protection, in the assurance that God, who had carried him in safety through so many sorrows, who had led him all his life long, and brought him even to grey hairs in peace, would never leave nor forsake him. Happy men! who, in the declining season of life, when the indications of approaching mortality are coming on, and strength is failing, can look back and say, "goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life;" then, with transporting joy, they may commit themselves to their God and Saviour, and rest in the blissful hope that they "shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

- 1 IN thee, O Jehovah! do I put my trust:
Let me never be put to confusion.
- 2 In thy righteousness, deliver me, and rescue me:
Incline to me thy ear, and save me.
- 3 Be unto me for a strong habitation, which I may evermore enter:
Give commandment to save me, for my rock and my fortress art thou.
- 4 O my God! deliver me from the hand of the wicked;
From the grasp of the arrogant, and the oppressor.
- 5 For thou art my hope, O Lord Jehovah!
My trust from my youth up.
- 6 On thee have I leaned from the womb:
From my birth, thou hast been my benefactor; I will praise thee.

- 7 I am like a prodigy to many ;
 For thou art my strong refuge.
- 8 My mouth is full of thy praise and thy glory, all the day.
- 9 Cast me not off in the time of old age ;
 In the declining of my strength forsake me not :
- 10 For my enemies speak against me ;
 And they who watch for my life consult together :
- 11 They say, God hath forsaken him ; persecute and take him,
 For there is no deliverer.
- 12 O God ! be not far from me :
 My God ! hasten to my help.
- 13 Let my adversaries be ashamed and destroyed ;
 Let them that seek my hurt, be covered with reproach and shame.
- 14 But I will evermore hope :
 I will add to all thy praise.
- 15 My mouth shall recount thy righteousness, all the day ;
 Thy salvation, of which I know not the extent.
- 16 I will proceed in the strength of the Lord Jehovah !
- 17 I will mention thy righteousness, thine only.
- 17 O God ! thou hast taught me from my youth ;
 And thus far, have I related thy wonders.
- 18 Now also when I am old and grey-headed, O God ! forsake me not ;
 While I shew to the age thy power, thy might to all posterity.
- 19 Thy righteousness also, O God ! is exalted :
 Thou doest great things ; O God ! who is like thee ?
- 20 Thou, who hast shewn me many great troubles, hast revived me ;
 And from the deep places of the earth thou hast raised me.
- 21 Thou hast also increased my greatness, and comforted me on
 every side.
- 22 I will praise thee on the stringed lute ; even thy truth, O my God !
 Unto thee will I sing with the harp, O Holy One of Israel !

7. *I am like a prodigy.*—The dangers to which he had been exposed were so great and so imminent, and his escapes from them so extraordinary and repeated, that men looked upon him as if he was exempt from the common lot of mankind, as if he possessed a charmed life, and was

invulnerable to all assaults. The reason why he became so, he assigns in the next clause, "Thou art my strong refuge."

20. *From the deep places of the earth.*—From the grave, to the borders of which he had often been brought by the dangers which surrounded him.

- 23 My lips shall rejoice while I sing unto thee ;
And my soul, which thou hast delivered.
- 24 My tongue shall talk of thy righteousness, all the day :
For they are confounded, for they are brought to shame,
Who seek my injury.

PSALM LXXII.

THIS is said in the title to be a Psalm "for Solomon;" but assuredly, "a greater than Solomon is here." The general opinion of expositors is, that it was written to celebrate the reign of this prince, and to be, in a secondary and remote sense, descriptive of that of the Messiah. It is somewhat surprising that so great a reluctance should have been shewn, in relation to this and other Psalms, to apply them directly to that most illustrious of all princes, who is so clearly manifested in them. This elegant and beautiful poem, interpreted as a prediction of the glorious and universal reign of Christ, is clear and free from all exaggeration: applied to Solomon, it is replete with immeasurable hyperbole. In a case so plain as this is, little regard is due to the inscription or title. The most ancient Jewish rabbins interpret it of the reign of the Messiah; and the greatest violence must be employed to adapt it to any other subject. By a succession of easy and elegant figures, the rectitude, compassion, and beneficence of our Saviour-King are embellished; and the opulence, glory, perpetuity, and universal extent of his kingdom are foretold.

We see not as yet the full accomplishment of the purposes of Heaven, which are here disclosed: but with full dependence upon their inviolable veracity, we look for a period in which the whole shall be amply verified; "when every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, shall say, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

FOR SOLOMON.

I GIVE the King thy judgments, O God !
And to the King's Son, thy righteousness.

1. *Give the King, &c.*]—*h. e.* The King Messiah. The object of the request is, that God would endow this illustrious Sovereign with the wisdom, rectitude, and beneficence, which were requisite to qualify him to reign as the image and representative of the most holy God: so

that all his judgments and decisions might be in perfect agreement with the will and nature of Him, whose righteousness is unchangeable and eternal.

— *The King's Son.*]—In the oriental idiom, the king's son is the king himself, who is the son of a king. The

- 2 Let him judge thy people with righteousness,
And thy afflicted with judgment.
- 3 The mountains will produce peace to the people,
And the hills righteousness.
- 4 He will judge the afflicted of the people ;
He will save the children of the destitute ;
And the oppressor will he crush.
- 5 They shall fear thee as long as the sun endureth,
And the moon ; throughout all ages.
- 6 He will descend as rain upon the mown grass ;
As the drops of an abundant rain, upon the earth.
- 7 In his days will the righteous flourish ;
And there will be great peace, as long as the moon endureth.
- 8 He will rule from sea to sea,
And from the river to the ends of the earth.
- 9 The inhabitants of the desert shall bow before him ;
And his enemies shall lick the dust.
- 10 The kings of Tarshish, and of distant regions, shall bring presents ;
The kings of Sheba and of Seba shall offer gifts.
- 11 All kings shall prostrate themselves before him ;
All nations shall serve him ;
- 12 For he will relieve the destitute from his outcry ;
The afflicted also, and him who hath no helper.
- 13 He will have pity on the poor and on the destitute ;
And the lives of the destitute will he save.
- 14 He will rescue them from fraud and from violence ;
And their blood will be precious in his sight.

same person is, therefore, intended by the two expressions ; a repetition which is quite agreeable to the structure of Hebrew verse.

3. *The mountains, &c.*—The fertility of the mountains and hills of Palestine is well known, and attested by many proofs. But hitherto, before the advent of the Messiah, they had been deficient in peace and righteousness. Under the dominion of this King of righteousness and peace, all such deficiencies are to be supplied.

8. *From the river, &c.*—The Euphrates is intended ; because this was the eastern boundary of what properly constituted the territory of the kings of Israel.

10. *Tarshish.*—A city in Spain famous for a colony of Phenicians, who carried on a great commerce with it. It is here used to express, figuratively, the great extent and opulence of the Messiah's kingdom.

— *Sheba and Seba.*—*sc.* Arabia and Æthiopia.

- 15 He will live ; and to him shall gold of Sheba be given :
 Prayer shall evermore be made for him :
 Daily shall he be praised.
- 16 Abundance of corn shall there be in the land ;
 On the tops of the mountains shall it wave ;
 The fruits thereof shall resemble Lebanon ;
 And the men of the city shall flourish, as the grass of the earth.
- 17 His name will endure for ever :
 As long as the sun endureth, will his name continue :
 All nations shall bless themselves in him, and shall praise him.
- 18 Blessed be Jehovah God ! the God of Israel ;
 Who alone doeth wonderful things :
- 19 And blessed be his glorious name for ever ;
 And let all the earth be filled with his glory ! Amen, and Amen.
- 20 The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.

PSALM LXXIII.

THERE appear to have been more persons than one distinguished by the name of Asaph. One there was who presided over the musical services of the sanctuary, in the time of David ; but there is no doubt that several of the Psalms which bear this inscription were written long after the days of David ; most likely by a descendant of the same name and family. On what occasion this Psalm was composed, we have it not in our power to determine. The subject of the poem which is now before us is, the difficulty of accounting, on the principles of reason, for the unequal distributions of the present state ; in which

16. *Abundance of corn, &c.*]—In the English translation, “A handful of corn.” This, however, seems to be entirely at variance with the design of the passage, which is to predict the signal fertility that was to accompany the reign of this Prince. Those expositors who adhere to this sense of the term interpret it to mean, that though only a small quantity of corn should be scattered upon the mountains as seed, a great and abundant produce should spring from it. The former, however, seems to be the preferable ex-

planation, as the term here used means diffusion, abundance, from a root that signifies to diffuse, spread abroad.

18. *Blessed be Jehovah God.*]—The Psalm, properly speaking, ends with ver. 17, as the doxologies that are in vv. 18, 19, were probably placed here by those who collected the Psalms and divided them into books ; to the end of each of which they appended doxologies, or ascriptions of glory to God.

20. *The prayers of David, &c.*]—*Vide* Additional Notes.

bad men are frequently prosperous, while men of piety and goodness are often distressed and afflicted. We learn from several instances which are recorded in the Scriptures, that this was a source of extreme perplexity and trial in former ages. Nor is there now any sufficient means of removing this difficulty, but that to which the Psalmist had recourse, and which he derived from the discoveries of revelation. Here, he informs us, when he was so disturbed and agitated, as nearly to be induced to abandon his trust in God, and his belief of the rectitude of the divine government, he learned the solution of this anxious doubt, that prosperity is in itself no argument of God's approbation, since it is frequently sent in anger, and becomes the means of augmented transgression and more certain ruin: and he, therefore, is led to express his sure belief in a future retribution, by which all these apparent discrepancies will be taken away; and to direct his expectations to a perfect and indestructible felicity and joy. Reposing his hope on this basis, he recovers the tranquillity of his mind, and avows the entire satisfaction of his soul in God, as his chief good, "his shield, and exceeding great reward."

A PSALM OF OR FOR ASAPH.

- 1 TRULY God is the good of Israel ;
Of the pure in heart.
- 2 But as for me, my feet had nearly turned aside ;
My steps had well-nigh slipped ;
- 3 For I was incensed at the foolish ;
I observed the prosperity of the wicked.
- 4 For they meet with no perplexities ;
Their strength is perfect and firm.
- 5 Into the trouble that is common to man, they come not :
Neither like men are they stricken.
- 6 Therefore pride compasseth them as a wrath ;
With a garment of violence they are covered.
- 7 Their eyes stand out with fatness ;
The desires of their hearts are exceeded.

1. *Truly God, &c.*—The mind of the Psalmist had been perplexed, and his heart agitated, respecting the divine dispensations; but at length he recovered himself from his anxiety, and declares it to be a verity never to be questioned, that God is the chief "good" of pious and holy men. As he begins the Psalm

with this sentiment, he also concludes with it, ver. 28.

6. *As a wreath.*—An ornamental chain, worn about the neck, or other parts of the body. The pride and violent oppression of prosperous and wicked men is thus figuratively described.

- 8 They scoff, and with wickedness utter oppression :
They speak loftily.
- 9 They set their mouth against the heavens ;
And their tongue traverseth the earth.
- 10 On this account, his people turn hitherward,
And drink up plentiful waters.
- 11 And they say, How doth God know ?
And is there knowledge in the High God ?
- 12 Behold ! these are the wicked ; yet they ever prosper :
They increase in wealth.
- 13 Surely I purify my heart in vain ;
And wash my hands in innocency.
- 14 For I am stricken every day ;
And my chastisement is renewed every morning.
- 15 Should I indeed resolve to speak thus,
Behold ! I should basely desert the race of thy children.

8. *Utter oppression.*—Their whole converse is of oppression, as the only thing of which they speak, and on which their souls are intent.

9. *Against the heavens, &c.*—They direct blasphemous speeches against God ; and their tongue confines not itself to truth, but travels, as it were, through the world in quest of falsehood and lies.

10. *His people turn, &c.*—This verse is very ambiguous. It is not clear who are intended by "his people." Calvin, and other subsequent interpreters, suppose it to refer to God's people, who, being deeply afflicted, are tempted to imitate the words and conduct of the wicked. But we can scarcely suppose these persons would so far depart from every principle of truth and propriety, as to be induced to say, as they do, to whom the text relates, "Doth God know?" &c. It is far more agreeable to the design of the entire passage, to interpret the words "his people," of the friends and connexions of the wicked, who imitate their actions, and in consequence enjoy great pleasures ; which is the sense of the

words that follow : "and drink up plentiful waters." That is, in oriental style, they gratify themselves to the utmost in pleasure and sensual delights. "Waters of fulness," as the Hebrew literally means, being a figure more applicable to prosperity than adversity, to which the above-mentioned expositors confine the expression.

15. *Should I indeed, &c.*—The writer strongly delineates the conflict of feeling and judgment in his bosom ; but he recollects himself, and says, "If I adopt these sentiments, I shall estrange myself from all good men, and act in a manner directly the reverse of theirs. Still," he goes on to say, "I could not satisfy myself by my own deliberations and reasonings ; I therefore attended the solemn worship of God, by which I was instructed." Many passages in the law would teach him what would be the end of prosperous impiety ; but, in addition to these, he received from direct revelation the knowledge respecting the future expectations of the righteous and the wicked in a future life, to which he so impressively adverts.

- 16 When I considered, in order to understand this,
It was painful in my sight ;
- 17 Until I came into the sanctuary of God,
When I discerned their latter end.
- 18 Surely thou settest them in slippery places ;
Thou hurlest them down to ruin.
- 19 How are they destroyed ! in a moment :
They are utterly consumed with terrors.
- 20 As a dream of one who awaketh,
In thy indignation, O Lord ! thou wilt despise their vain shew.
- 21 While my heart was fretting itself,
And I was exasperating myself within me ;
- 22 Then I became stupid, and I knew not :
A brute beast was I in thy sight.
- 23 Nevertheless, I am continually before thee ;
Thou holdest me by my right hand.
- 24 By thy counsel thou leadest me ;
And hereafter, to glory thou wilt take me.
- 25 Whom have I in heaven but thee ?
And on earth I have no delight compared with thee.
- 26 Should my flesh and my heart fail,
God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.
- 27 For lo ! they who are far from thee perish :
Thou destroyest all who treacherously depart from thee.
- 28 But as for me, an approach to God is my good :
I put my trust in the Lord Jehovah, to recount all thy doings.

20. *As a dream.*] — The thought here is, as a pleasing dream vanishes instantly on awaking, so the pleasures of these men will vanish, and shew their unsubstantial nature, when God shall effect his righteous judgment.

— *Their vain shew.* Eng. Translation, *Their image.*] — The Hebrew term means an unsubstantial appearance, splendid while it continues, but which in an instant disappears. "Made of such stuff as dreams."

22. *I became stupid, &c.*] — The

meaning evidently is, that this state of stupidity and brutal insensibility existed, when he was overcome by the false reasonings and perplexing imaginations to which he adverts ; but now he is enlightened, and enabled to speak, as a man of sound understanding and real piety. He therefore avows his firm belief in the rectitude of the divine government, and expressly declares that God was the source of his dearest pleasures, and the object of his most glorious hopes.

PSALM LXXIV.

THE destruction of Jerusalem, and the subjugation of the entire country, is, most probably, the subject of this Psalm. The idolatrous Chaldeans, under Nebuchadnezzar, had desecrated and demolished the temple, together with other places in which the worship of God had been carried on. They put an end to the solemn services of religion, and filled the whole land with rapine and blood. No longer were there any divine communications by prophets or inspired men; God had given up his people to ruin; the land was darkened by extreme misery, and nothing was visible but the footsteps of war and the ravages of destruction. In this distressing condition of his country, the pious author of the Psalm undertakes to plead with God, to ask if he had altogether abandoned his people, and determined that the desolation should be perpetual? He prays that the blasphemous reproaches of the victorious enemy might be restrained, and that God, who seemed to look on as an unconcerned spectator, would at length arise and extend protection to them. As an argument to this effect, he recites the wonderful displays of power and goodness with which God had formerly distinguished them; he ascribes the direction of all events to his supreme and sovereign power; and offers importunate supplications, that the Most High would call to remembrance the tender affection which he had borne to them, and the covenant which he had so solemnly established with their ancestors.

MASCHIL OF ASAPH.

- 1 WHEREFORE, O God! dost thou cast us off?
Will thy indignation smoke for ever,
Against the sheep of thy pasture?
- 2 Remember thy congregation which thou didst purchase of old;
The tribe of thy inheritance, which thou redeemedst;
This mountain of Zion, on which thou hast dwelt.
- 3 Lift up thy footsteps towards the ruins which are perpetual,
All the mischiefs of the enemy, in the sanctuary.
- 4 Thy adversaries roar in the midst of thy congregation:
They set up their banners for signals.
- 5 They are known, as one who lifteth up the axe
Against a thicket of trees:
- 6 Thus they now demolish the carved work,
With crow-bars, and pickaxes together.

5. *They are known, &c.*]—The destroyers of the temple, and of other splendid buildings, are here compared to men, whose business it was to cut down trees in thick

forests; as they used little art and much strength, with rough instruments, so these hostile spoilers roughly and rapidly accomplished their work of destruction.

- 7 They cast fire upon thy sanctuary ;
They violate it, levelling it with the ground.
- 8 They say in their hearts, Let us destroy them at once :
They burn all the edifices of God in the land.
- 9 We see not our solemn rites ; no longer is there a prophet,
Nor any one that knoweth how long.
- 10 How long, O God ! shall the adversary blaspheme ?
Shall the enemy reject thy name for ever ?
- 11 Why dost thou withdraw thy hand, even thy right hand ?
Pluck it out of thy bosom.
- 12 For God is my King, from ancient time,
Who effecteth salvation in the midst of the earth.
- 13 Thou didst divide the sea by thy power :
Thou brakest the heads of sea-monsters in the waters.
- 14 Thou brakest the heads of the Leviathan into pieces,
And gavest him for food, to the inhabitants of the desert.
- 15 Thou didst cleave out a fountain and a stream ;
Thou driedst up mighty waters.
- 16 The day is thine ; the night also is thine :
Thou hast established the light, and the sun.
- 17 Thou didst fix all the boundaries of the earth :
Thou madest the summer and the winter.
- 18 Remember this : the enemy blasphemeth, O Jehovah !
And the impious people reject thy name.
- 19 O deliver not thy turtle-dove to the multitude ;
Forget not, for ever, the congregation of thy afflicted ones.

8. *The edifices of God.*—It is supposed that what are properly called synagogues were not in use until after the return from Babylon ; yet there might be other sacred places and buildings, for purposes of instruction or devotion, as the schools of the prophets, &c. to which the reference in this verse is made.

9. *Our solemn rites.* Literally, *signs.*—*i. e.* Sacrifices, public assemblies, feasts, &c.

13. *Sea-monsters.*—By these, as well as by the Leviathan, in the next verse, are meant Pharaoh, and his princes, generals, &c.

14. *Inhabitants of the desert.*—Probably the sense of this is, that the dead bodies of the Egyptians were for prey to wild beasts, and some of their spoils and plunder a booty to the tribes of the desert or wilderness.

15. *Cleave out a fountain.*—The miraculous supply of water which was produced from the rock in the wilderness, is manifestly intended.

16. *The day is thine, &c.*—This enumeration of the works of God is evidently designed to impress the sentiment, that he who had done such stupendous works could be at no loss to rescue his people, even from this tremendous desolation.

- 20 Have regard to the covenant ; for the dark parts of the land
Are filled with the habitations of violence.
- 21 O ! let not the oppressed depart from thee ashamed :
Let the afflicted and the destitute praise thy name.
- 22 Arise, O God ! plead thy cause :
Remember how the impious blaspheme thee, all the day.
- 23 Forget not the voice of thy enemies :
The tumult of thy opposers is ascending continually.

PSALM LXXV.

INTERPRETERS differ very much one from another respecting the times and persons to whom this Psalm relates. Some refer it to David, some to Zorobabel, and others to Judas Maccabæus. Calvin seems to think that it does not belong to any specific persons or things, but is generally applicable to the divine power and authority, which are universally conversant with the affairs of the world, to preserve it from decay and ruin. He strongly protests against an application of it to the Messiah, which he denominates *argutia*, *sc.* a groundless conceit. Amidst so many discordant opinions, all that is left us, is to consider with attention the language, and to form the best judgment in our power on the subject. It appears to me, that the expressions which are contained in the Psalm cannot, without impropriety and violence, be applied to David, or to any other human person. The language is such as to indicate a divine speaker : and I think the best interpretation consists in taking the Psalm as a description of the overruling providence of the Most High, and a tacit enunciation of the kingdom of the Messiah, which is the final dispensation of heaven ; and which will establish the righteous in the possession of perpetual and undecaying peace, safety, and honour, while it will inflict the last and irretrievable condemnation and punishment upon the wicked. This interpretation derives some support from the title, which ascribes the Psalm to Asaph, whom I suppose to have lived at, or after the time of the Babylonish captivity, when the affairs of Israel were in a low and enfeebled state, and when men, guided by the indications of prophecy, were looking for the setting up of that kingdom which is destined finally to subdue and triumph over all others.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. AL-TASCHITH. A PSALM OF ASAPH. A SONG.

I WE praise thee, O God ! we praise thee :
Thy wondrous works declare thy name to be near,

1. *Thy name to be near.*] — *i. e.* Thy power, wisdom, and perfection are every where present, and are specially employed on behalf of them that fear thee.

- 2 When I shall attain the appointed time,
I will exercise judgment with righteousness.
- 3 Dissolved is the earth, and all its inhabitants;
The pillars thereof I sustain.
- 4 I say to the fools, act not foolishly;
And to the wicked, lift not up the horn.
- 5 Lift not up your horn on high;
Speak not with a stiff neck.

2. *When I shall attain, &c.*] — The perusal of this and the following verses will, I imagine, induce most considerate readers to regard them as words not suited to any human person whatever. There is in them an assumption of power and influence which belong only to God; and the fittest interpretation that can be put upon them appears to me to be that which represents them as the words of the Messiah. He alone performs the works of God,—"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Taken in this view, they will be a declaration made by the Redeemer, either in the prospect of his incarnation, or subsequently to it, before he entered on his public ministry. We may, therefore, look upon the first verse as a declaration on the part of the church, celebrating the glories of God, not only in creation and providence, but chiefly and especially in redemption. To this declaration the Messiah responds, "When I shall attain 'the appointed time,' *h. e.* when the period fixed upon by the wisdom and foreknowledge of God shall arrive, I will discharge the offices which belong to the King of the church, and the Lord of the world, to whom "all power both in heaven and earth is committed," with unswerving uprightness and constancy. So Isa. xi. 2—5.

He then proceeds to assert the ruined and, as it were, dilapidated condition of the world, and his own energy in sustaining its pillars. How such an assertion can be deemed compatible with the power of any earthly prince or ruler, without a very forced interpretation, I am unable to discover.

He then, verses 4—7, expresses the thoughts, and delivers the counsels, which were appropriate to his character, as the righteous messenger of his Father: and, ver. 8, proclaims the fearful punishment of the finally impenitent and unbelieving. He does this in terms which appear to have been in the view of the inspired writer of the Apocalypse, xiv. 10, "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation, and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb."

In conclusion, he declares his fixed purpose to publish the counsels and praises of God, whose vicegerent and representative he is, to the human race. The language of ver. 8 is highly figured, but it is perfectly intelligible.

The reader is requested to observe, that I do not offer this interpretation as absolutely certain, and free from all exception. The case is, that I am not satisfied with any of the interpretations which I have seen; and, for the reasons which have been given, I think it to be the most probable design of the Psalm. At all events, viewed in this way, it is in harmony with the acknowledged characters of the Messiah, and may, with great propriety, be used as an incentive to listen to his voice, who speaks to us from heaven, as the gracious Redeemer, and almighty Guardian of the world, and who, ere long, will be revealed in "the glory of his Father, and of the holy angels," as its judge.

- 6 For exaltation cometh not from the east,
Nor from the west, nor from the south :
- 7 For God is the arbiter :
One he bringeth low, another he raiseth up.
- 8 Verily there is a cup in the hand of Jehovah ;
The wine is turbid, full of mixture ; he poureth it forth ;
The dregs of it shall all the wicked on earth drain and drink.
- 9 But I will publish for ever ;
I will sing praise to the God of Jacob.
- 10 All the horns of the wicked will I cut off :
The horns of the righteous shall be exalted.

PSALM LXXVI.

THIS Psalm forms a grand triumphal hymn ; but on what occasion it was composed we cannot determine, as there are no indications of this nature contained in it. It begins by directing attention to the glorious manifestations of himself which God had made to Israel, and celebrating Jerusalem and Zion as being adorned and honoured by the divine presence and abode with them. In continuation of this theme, the Psalmist breaks out into a sublime apostrophe, addressed to Mount Zion, which he eulogizes as being more glorious than any of the vast mountains, which were the abodes of wild beasts, and frequented by courageous hunters who went in quest of them. The Psalm then proceeds to celebrate the triumphant victories over their enemies, which God had granted to his people, in which he had displayed his invincible prowess and the resistless power of his arm. The conclusion asserts the entire subjection of all human passions to the control of the God of Israel ; and exhorts the people, who were so signally distinguished by his favour and protection, to render to him the oblations and services to which he was so justly entitled.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. ON NEGINOTH. A PSALM OF ASAPH. A SONG.

- 1 IN Judah God is known :
In Israel his name is great.
- 2 In Salem also is his tabernacle :
And his dwelling-place in Zion.
- 3 There he brake the fiery arrows of the bow,
The shield, and the sword, and the battle. SELAH.

2. *In Salem.*—Jerusalem.

3. *The fiery arrows.*—The arrows are described as fiery, to denote, either the

rapidity of their motion, or that they were tinged with some poisonous drugs to render them more deadly.

- 5 The stout-hearted are spoiled, they sleep when sleep :
The mighty men find not their hands.
- 6 At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob !
Both the chariot and the horse are cast into a dead sleep.
- 7 Thou, even thou, art to be feared :
Who may stand before thee when thou art incensed ?
- 8 From heaven thou makest thy decision heard ;
The earth feareth, and is still ;
- 9 When God ariseth to judgment,
To save all the afflicted of the earth. SELAH.
- 10 For the wrath of man will praise thee ;
And the superfluity of wrath thou wilt restrain.
- 11 Vow, and pay unto Jehovah, your God :
Let all that attend upon him bring presents,
To him who is worthy to be feared.
- 12 He breaketh the pride of princes ;
He is terrible to the kings of the earth.

PSALM LXXVII.

what particular occasion this divine song was composed there are no of ascertaining, further than that the pious author of it was in deep on and inconsolable distress. His sorrows affected him to such a degree, : was alarmed at the contemplation of God, who, in foregoing days, had he most pleasing object of his thoughts. "Now," says he, "my soul h to be comforted." He turned away from every topic of consolation, love with misery, and abandoned himself altogether to the most gloomy ightful anticipations. The night, the season of repose, afforded him no Sleep forsook his eyes, which were drenched with incessant weeping ;

fore illustrious, &c.—The divine us apostrophizes the mountain of 'Thou art more glorious, by the and presence of Jehovah, and the hs which he had there conferred people, than any of the huge ins in the vicinity, which were for hunting or for war."
hey sleep their sleep.—The sleep

of death. See Jer. li. 39 ; "That they may sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the Lord."

10. *The wrath of man.*—Human passions, however vehement, are under the perfect management of God, who fulfils his own purposes, by permitting them to proceed to a definite limit, which he himself fixes, and preventing their further progress.

ting presages of despair. "Is his mercy quite gone for ever? doth his love fail for evermore?" In this condition of harassing sensibility and extent he at length discerns a glimpse of hope: "I said, This is my disease." and is oppressed by the morbid feelings of my corporeal frame, and on account the changes by which the hand of God has affected me appear in darkest colours, and I am ready to give up every hope that he will ever give his goodness to me as he formerly did.

He then engages in an earnest conflict with his disconsolate feelings, and, by entire recollection of the wonders of divine benignity in former occurrences, he checks, in some measure, the torrents that were overwhelming him, and strengthens himself in a hope, that he too, cast down, forsaken, and agitated as he was, might yet experience a restoration of God's loving kindness so as to be enabled to rejoice again in his surpassing grace and compassion. Meditation of the holy Scriptures, pregnant as they are with topics of consolation for the afflicted, has probably been perused with more ardent attention in his Psalm; probably none has been productive of greater relief, nor any, which more fervid expressions of thankfulness to God for his word, have led to the throne of heavenly mercy, and penetrated to the audience of merciful Parent who sits thereon. To all who thus mourn, and who have recourse to such means of relief, the blessed Saviour himself ministers heavenly consolation: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. TO JEDUTHUN. A PSALM OF ASAPH. A SONG.

- 1 I CALL upon God with my voice ;
Upon God with my voice, that he may hearken to me.
- 2 In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord ;
My hand is stretched out, in the night, and faileth not ;
My soul refuseth to be comforted.
- 3 I remember God, and I am troubled :
I complain, and my spirit is darkened. SELAH.
- 4 Thou holdest my eyes waking ;
I am so troubled that I cannot speak.

I remember God, &c.—He recalled memory the happiness he had formerly enjoyed in the favour and mercy of God, which he was now deprived. This reflection in God's conduct towards him filled him with fear, lest God should have forsaken him, and have become his enemy. It is therefore little surprising, that the thoughts of an almighty and irreconcilable enemy excited his most painful

apprehensions, and filled him with terror. No man in this life has, however, any right to draw such a conclusion; the course for us, in the midst of the deepest distress and heaviest affliction that can befall us, is to cast ourselves upon the mercy of God in Christ, and to wait with assured hope that fulfilment of his covenant to which he has pledged his veracity and faithfulness.

- 5 I consider the days of old,
The years of ancient times :
- 6 I call to remembrance my song in the night ;
I commune with my heart, and my soul maketh inquiry,
- 7 Will the Lord cast off for ever ?
And will he be favourable no more ?
- 8 Is his mercy quite gone, for ever ?
Doth his promise fail for evermore ?
- 9 Doth God forget to be gracious ?
Doth he, in anger, shut up his tender mercies ? SELAH.
- 10 Then I said, My disease is this,
The change of the right hand of the High God.
- 11 I will remember the works of Jehovah ;
Surely I will call to mind thy former wonders.
- 12 I will also muse on all thy work ;
And I will contemplate thy doings.
- 13 Thy way, O God ! is holy :
Who is a great God, as the God of Israel ?
- 14 Thou, O God ! actest wonderfully :
Thou shewest thy strength among the peoples.
- 15 Thou didst redeem the people by thy arm :
The sons of Jacob and Joseph. SELAH.
- 16 The waters saw thee, O God ! the waters saw thee :
They were afraid, and the deeps were troubled.

6. *My song in the night.*—The times were indeed greatly altered ; formerly his sleep had been prevented by the joyfulness of his feelings, which prompted the voice of thanksgiving during even the shades of night ; now his sleep is taken away by the severity of his disease and the anguish of his soul, which was augmented by the contrast with his past happiness.

10. *I said, My disease is this.*—Such is the exact rendering of the text. Some painful disease had befallen him, which was heightened by the depression of his spirits, which deprived him of mental vigour and energy, and clothed every object in the blackest colours.

— *The change of the right hand.*—There is no authority for the version, “ I will remember the years ;” his meaning is, the power of God has changed and altered my condition ; from a state of health and peace he has brought me into disease, and pain, and sorrow. This, he says, he will remember, so as to inspire some hope, that the power which had brought low would again raise him up.

15. *The sons of Jacob and Joseph.*—The reason of Joseph's being coupled with Jacob is, that as the Israelites derived their birth from Jacob, so they were sustained by Joseph, in Egypt, who became to them a second parent.

- 17 The clouds poured out water, the skies sent forth a sound ;
 Thy arrows also went abroad.
- 18 The voice of thy thunder was in the whirlwind ; [shook.
 Thy lightnings illumined the world ; the earth trembled, and
- 19 Thy way was in the sea, and thy path in the great waters ;
 And thy footsteps are not known.
- 20 Thou didst lead thy people like a flock,
 By the hand of Moses and Aaron.

PSALM LXXVIII.

THE instructive poem to which the attention of the reader is now to be directed may, with propriety, be regarded as a commentary upon the solemn message which the evangelical prophet was commissioned to deliver to his countrymen ; " Say ye to the righteous, It shall be well with him, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings : woe to the wicked, it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given to him." Isa. iii. 10. The special purpose for which this Psalm was composed has, with great probability, been supposed by Schnurrer, to be the celebration of a decisive victory which was obtained over the kingdom of Ephraim or Israel, by Abijah, the king of Judah, during the reign of Jeroboam. There is a eulogy passed upon David, at the conclusion of the Psalm, which makes it likely that the author of it wished to conciliate the favour of the whole people towards David's successors, from whom Jeroboam had revolted : and, in ver. 9, there is a reference to Ephraim, which affords some degree of evidence in support of Schnurrer's hypothesis. Rosenm. in Psalm lxxviii. Whatever may be thought of this hypothesis, we cannot hesitate to admit, that the Psalm itself is clear, pungent, and persuasive, and must have been felt to be so by the persons for whose use it was written. It delivers a concise narrative of many of the extraordinary exertions of divine power in behalf of the descendants of Israel, and recounts several instances of their extraordinary inconsistency, ingratitude, and incorrigible temper. The history commences with the exodus from Egypt, and is brought down to the reign of David, with which it ends.

We can scarcely peruse this divine composition without a recollection of the solemn duty which it enjoins on all christian parents, to impart to their children a knowledge of God's compassionate and righteous dealings with men, by

19. *Thy footsteps are not known.*]—This was manifestly the case when God made a way through the Red Sea for his people whom he led ; and when the Egyptians, endeavouring to follow the same road,

were overwhelmed in the returning waters. The sentiment is of general application.

" God moves in a mysterious way,
 His wonders to perform."

glorious things he did, in the sight of man
 In the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.
 He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through ;
 He made the waters to stand as a mound.
 In the day he led them by a cloud ;
 And all the night by the light of fire.
 He clave the rocks in the wilderness ;
 And gave them drink as out of great deeps.
 He brought forth rivers from the bare rock ;
 He made the waters to flow down like streams.
 But they sinned yet more against him :
 To provoke the High One in the desert.
 They also tempted God with full purpose,
 By asking food for their appetite.
 They even spoke against God ; they said,
 Is God able also to prepare a table in the wilderness ?
 Lo ! he hath smitten the rock, and the waters gushed out ;
 And streams overflowed : can he give bread also ?
 Can he provide flesh for his people ?
 Therefore Jehovah heard, and he was incensed :
 A fire was kindled in Jacob, and wrath ascended against Israel.
 Because they believed not in God,
 Nor relied on his salvation.
 Then he issued a command to the clouds, on high ;
 And he opened the doors of heaven.
 Then he rained upon them manna, for food ;
 And corn of heaven he gave them :
 Delicious bread did man eat ;
 He sent them provision to satisfaction.

The field of Zoan.—The territory
 strict of Tanis, as the Septuagint
 renders this term. Tanis was a
 ancient city, the royal abode of the
 pharaohs.

With full purpose.—To say they
 tempted God in their hearts, is to repre-
 sent what was public and manifest as if

it were concealed in their bosoms. The
 expression is, "with their heart;" *i. e.* *ex*
animo, heartily, or with all the soul.

21. *Wrath ascended.*—The term as-
 cended is figurative, derived from the
 ascending of the breath, in vehement
 gusts of agitation and anger.

25. *Delicious bread.*—"Bread of the

- 26 He caused an east wind to blow in the heavens ;
And by his power he led forth a south wind.
- 27 So he rained upon them flesh, like dust ;
And winged fowl, as the sand of the sea.
- 28 He caused it to come down in the midst of their camp,
Round about their habitations.
- 29 Then did they eat, they were fully gratified ;
And what they longed for came unto them.
- 30 They had not ceased from satisfying their desire,
Their food was still in their mouth,
- 31 When the wrath of God ascended against them ;
And he slew their chiefs ; the chosen of Israel he brought low.
- 32 For all this, they still sinned ;
And put no faith in his wonders.
- 33 Therefore, he wasted their days in vanity ;
And their years in terror.
- 34 When he slew them, then they sought him ;
They turned, and inquired early for God.
- 35 For they recollected that God was their rock ;
And the High God their Redeemer.
- 36 So they flattered him with their mouth ;
And with their tongue they uttered falsehoods to him.
- 37 But their heart was not right with him ;
Nor did they put faith in his covenant. [them :
- 38 Yet he, being merciful, forgave their iniquity, and did not destroy
Even many times he turned away his anger ;
And roused not against them all his indignation.
- 39 For he recollected that they were flesh ;
A wind that passeth, and returneth not.
- 40 How often did they provoke him, in the wilderness !
And weary him, in the desert !
- 41 They tempted God, again and again :
They afflicted the Holy One of Israel.

mighty;" that which the opulent and the higher orders eat ; the best, the choicest of bread.

33. *In vanity.*]—They were detained by marches up and down for no purpose

but to wear out their lives ; their desires of seeing and enjoying the promised land were all frustrated ; and they left the world under these marks of divine displeasure.

- 42 They remembered not his hand ;
The day in which he rescued them from trouble :
- 43 When he performed his miracles in Egypt ;
And his wonders in the field of Zoan.
- 44 When he turned their rivers into blood ;
So that they could not drink of their streams.
- 45 He sent among them the horse-fly, which devoured them :
And the frogs, which destroyed them.
- 46 He gave to the caterpillar their produce ;
And their labour to the locust.
- 47 He destroyed their vines with hail ;
And their sycamores with hoar-frost.
- 48 He gave up their herds to the hail ;
And their flocks to flames of fire.
- 49 He sent among them his burning indignation ;
Anger, fury, and affliction ; an embassy of evil messengers.
- 50 He made straight a path for his anger :
He delivered not their life from death :
He gave up their cattle to the pestilence.
- 51 He smote all the first-born of Egypt :
The first-fruits of their strength, in the tents of Ham :
- 52 He conducted his people like sheep :
He led them, as a flock, in the wilderness.
- 53 He guided them safely, and they were not afraid :
But their enemies the sea covered.
- 54 He brought them to his holy border :
This mountain, which his right hand acquired.
- 55 He expelled from before them the nations ;
And distributed their inheritance by the line ;
So he caused the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.
- 56 Again they tempted, and provoked the High God ;
And his commandments they kept not.
- 57 But apostatized, and were treacherous, like their fathers ;
They were perverse, like a slackened bow.
- 58 They provoked him with their high places ;
And with their carved images they incensed him.

- 59 God heard, and was indignant :
And he exceedingly abhorred Israel.
- 60 He abandoned the tabernacle in Shiloh ;
The tent where he dwelt with men.
- 61 He gave up their strength to captivity ;
And their glory to the power of the enemy.
- 62 He delivered up his people to the sword ;
And against his inheritance his anger burned.
- 63 Their young men the fire devoured ;
Their virgins were not applauded.
- 64 Their priests fell by the sword ;
And their widows were not lamented.
- 65 Then the Lord awoke, as one asleep ;
As a mighty man, exulting with wine.
- 66 He smote their enemies behind :
Everlasting disgrace he inflicted upon them.
- 67 He rejected the tabernacle of Joseph ;
And the tribe of Ephraim he did not choose :
- 68 But he chose the tribe of Judah :
The mountain of Zion, which he loved.
- 69 There he built his sanctuary like the high heaven :
Like the earth, he established it for ever.
- 70 He also chose David his servant ;
He took him from the sheep-folds.
- 71 From following the milch ewes, he brought him,
To feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.
- 72 And he led them, according to the uprightness of his heart ;
According to the prudence of his hands he guided them.

60. *In Shiloh.*]—A city of Ephraim.

63. *The fire.*]—*scil.* Of God's vengeance.

— *Their virgins were not applauded.*]—

i. e. No bridal songs or epithalamiums were sung to celebrate their nuptials ; but they continued in a single and solitary condition.

PSALM LXXIX.

THERE is little or no room for doubting that this Psalm is to be assigned to the same events which are deplored in Psalm lxxiv. The captivity and destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar are evidently the themes of the pious writer's lamentations. He notices, in very affecting terms, the merciless ravages of the victorious Chaldeans, and addresses most earnest and pathetic supplications to God on behalf of his countrymen. The whole is so plain and intelligible as to need no elucidation; and the account which is delivered of the dreadful retribution, which the vengeance of God inflicted upon his apostatizing people, is so impressive as to supersede any attempt to impart additional force to it. These people had been spared by the most astonishing exercise of divine patience and long-suffering; they had had "line upon line, and precept upon precept," but they obstinately persisted in their idolatries and disobedience: they had said, "Let him make speed and hasten his work that we may see it; and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh, and come, that we may know it." So thoughtless and impious mortals dare to presume, till irretrievable and hopeless ruin convinces them, that the truth of religion is "no cunningly devised fable," and harden themselves in unbelief, till their actual and palpable wretchedness forces itself upon their senses, and dissolves the fatal delusions by which the love and practice of iniquity had blinded them!

A PSALM OF ASAPH.

- 1 O GOD! the nations have invaded thy inheritance:
They desecrate thy holy temple; they lay Jerusalem in heaps.
- 2 The corpses of thy servants they give for food to the fowls of
the air;
The flesh of thy saints to the beasts of the earth.
- 3 Their blood they shed like water, around Jerusalem:
And there is none to perform burial.
- 4 We are become a theme of reproach to our neighbours;
A scorn and a derision to them that are around us.
- 5 How long, O Jehovah! wilt thou be wroth? for ever?
Shall thy jealousy burn like fire?
- 6 Pour out thy wrath upon the nations that know thee not:
And on the kingdoms which call not upon thy name.
- 7 For they devour Jacob:
They make desolate his dwelling-place.

- 8 O ! remember not against us the iniquities of former times :
Let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us ; for we are brought
very low.
- 9 Help us, O God of our salvation ! for the glory of thy name :
Rescue us, and forgive our sins, for thy name's sake.
- 10 Why do the nations say, Where is their God ?
Let him be made known among the nations, in our sight ;
By the avenging of the blood of thy servants, which is shed.
- 11 Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee :
According to the greatness of thy power,
Preserve them that are appointed to die.
- 12 Recompense our neighbours seven-fold, into their bosom ;
Their blasphemy, with which they blaspheme thee, O Lord !
- 13 So we thy people, the sheep of thy pasture,
Will give thee thanks for ever :
We will shew forth thy praise to all generations.
-

PSALM LXXX.

WE cannot, with any tolerable certainty, ascertain the events to which this Psalm owes its origin. Various conjectures respecting them are made by expositors, none of which, however, are sufficiently probable to insure our entire acquiescence in them. Calvin maintains that the Psalm does not relate to the whole people, but that the ten tribes, denominated the kingdom of Israel, in contradistinction to that of Judah, furnish the subject of it. He supports this opinion chiefly by the mention which is made, in ver. 2, of Ephraim, and Benjamin, and Manasseh ; but this argument is inapplicable, because Benjamin was united with Judah in forming the kingdom which went under the name of the latter. In addition, it may be noticed, that the calamities which are specified, are so extensive and general, as to render it all but certain, that the writer of the Psalm speaks of the entire people. The similitude also which he employs of a vine transplanted from Egypt, confirms this view, and leads to a conclusion, that the whole of the descendants of Israel are intended. If this view of the matter be correct, the calamitous condition which the Psalm deplures is most likely to be the same with that to which the last Psalm, the seventy-ninth, relates ; so that when it is said, ver. 16, speaking of the people, under the image of a vine, " It is burnt with fire, it is cut down, they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance," we shall not be materially wrong in applying

these strong terms to the complete and long-continued subjection under which the kingdom was reduced by the arms of Nebuchadnezzar.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. ON SHOSHANNIM EDUTH. A PSALM OF ASAPH.

- 1 HEARKEN, O Shepherd of Israel! who leadest Joseph like a flock:
Thou who sittest above the cherubim, shine forth.
- 2 In the sight of Ephraim, and Benjamin, and Manassch,
Rouse up thy strength; and come to our deliverance.
- 3 Revive us, O God! cause thy face to shine,
That we may be saved.
- 4 O Jehovah, God of Hosts! how long wilt thou be incensed
Against the supplication of thy people?
- 5 Thou feedest them with bread of weeping;
Thou givest them tears to drink abundantly.
- 6 Thou makest us a source of strife to our neighbours;
And our enemies laugh among themselves.
- 7 Revive us, O God of Hosts! cause thy face to shine,
That we may be saved.
- 8 Thou didst bring a vine out of Egypt;
Thou didst expel the nations, and plant us:
- 9 Thou didst cleave the ground for it, and cause it to take deep root,
So that it filled the land:
- 10 The hills were covered with its shadow;
And its branches resembled lofty cedars:
- 11 It extended its boughs to the sea,
And its branches to the river.
- 12 Why hast thou broken down its fences,
So that all who pass by the way pluck it?
- 13 The boar of the wood wasteth it;
And the wild beast of the field devoureth it.

1. *Above the cherubim.*]—The divine glory was manifested over the cherubim, which were upon the ark, in the sanctuary.

6. *A source of strife.*]—*i. e.* An object of contention among the surrounding nations, for the largest share of the plunder.

8. *A vine out of Egypt.*]—The people of Israel.

— *The nations.*]—*i. e.* The Canaanites.

11. *To the sea.*]—The Mediterranean, on the west of Palestine: "the river," the Euphrates, which was the eastern boundary of the territory of Israel, in the days of prosperity.

- 14 Return now, O God of Hosts ! look down from heaven ;
And behold, and visit this vine ;
- 15 The scion, which thy right hand planted ;
Even the branch, which thou madest strong for thyself.
- 16 It is burnt with fire, swept away :
They have perished at the rebuke of thy countenance.
- 17 Let thy support be extended to the man of thy right hand ;
To the son of man, whom thou madest strong for thyself.
- 18 So will we not depart from thee :
Quicken us, and we will call upon thy name.
- 19 Revive us, O Jehovah, God of Hosts ! cause thy face to shine,
That we may be saved.

PSALM LXXXI.

THIS song of praise was most likely written to be sung at some celebration of the feast of the Passover, during the reign of Jehoshaphat or of Hezekiah. The purpose of it, after some introductory exhortations to celebrate the festive occasion with becoming cheerfulness and gratitude, is to take a brief review of the singular blessings which God had bestowed on Israel, and to express deep regret that the people had so lost sight of their duty and happiness as to make the most unworthy returns for the love and favour which God had shewn to them. Nothing can be more tender or condescending, than the language which the Lord of heaven and earth addresses to these infatuated people. Acute disputers and profound polemics have raised interminable controversies respecting the sense of such representations ; many of which we happily find in both the Old and New Testaments. But those readers shew themselves to be possessors of the truest wisdom, who, laying aside the hopeless project of subjecting the course of heaven to the penetration of men, employ these divine intimations to impress on their hearts deep and salutary sentiments of humility, penitence, and self-abhorrence. Such sentiments well become men who have a due consciousness of their own ungrateful returns for the inestimable favours which they have received at the hands of God ; and who attentively review the tender, persuasive, and most affecting appeals which the blessed God has delivered to his offending creatures.

16. *They have perished.*—*i. e.* The vine and its branches are destroyed, in consequence of thy displeasure.

17. *The man of thy right hand.*—The

Psalmist here quits the figurative representation, and speaks literally of the people of Israel, whom God had chosen, and so greatly favoured. *Vide* ver. 15.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. ON GITTITH. A PSALM OF ASAPH.

- 1 SING aloud unto God our strength :
Make a joyful noise unto the God of Israel.
- 2 Raise a song, bring the timbrel,
The pleasant harp, with the lute.
- 3 Sound the trumpet, at the new moon ;
At the time appointed, on the day of our festival.
- 4 For this was a statute for Israel ;
A law of the God of Jacob.
- 5 This he ordained in Joseph,
When he went forth against the land of Egypt.
A voice I hear, which I am ignorant of !
- 6 " I removed the burden from his shoulder :
" His hands were freed from the basket.
- 7 " Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee ;
" I answered thee by thunder, from a hidden retreat :
" I tried thee at the waters of Meribah. SELAH.
- 8 " Hear, O my people ! and I will lay an injunction upon thee :
" O Israel ! I would that thou hearkenedst to me.
- 9 " There shall be no foreign God among you ;
" Neither shall thou worship a stranger God. [Egypt :
- 10 " I am Jehovah, thy God, who brought thee up from the land of
" Enlarge thy desire and I will gratify it.

3. *Day of our festival.*]—*scil.* Of the passover.

5. *When he went forth, &c.*]—*i. e.* When God went forth to destroy the first-born in all the land of Egypt ; on account of which the passover was appointed.

— *A voice I hear, &c.*—There seems to be no reason for this clause, if it mean that the Israelites heard a language which they did not understand : it is a circumstance which has no relation to the subject. I am therefore disposed to adopt the interpretation of Doederlein, who says, " It is a sudden digression, suitable to the poetic impulse : the prophet felt himself suddenly influenced by a divine afflatus, and heard an oracle addressed

to him, which consisted of the words that immediately follow, spoken in the person of God : ' I removed,' &c." In this manner he introduces the sublime and affecting address, " of which," he says, " I am ignorant." He did not at first fully comprehend the design of the inspiring spirit, by which he felt himself actuated.

6. *The basket.*]—Or hod, in which bricks were carried.

7. *By thunder, &c.*]—A reference to the majestic display on Sinai, where, though the symbols of the present Deity were seen and heard, the lightnings and thunders, he himself was concealed from all human view.

- 11 " But my people hearkened not to my voice ;
 " And Israel submitted not to me.
 12 " Therefore I gave them up to the purposes of their heart ;
 " They walked in their own counsels.
 13 " O ! that my people had hearkened unto me ;
 " That Israel had walked in my ways.
 14 " Soon should I have subdued their enemies ;
 " And turned my hand against their adversaries.
 15 " The haters of Jehovah should have submitted to him :
 " But their time should have been everlasting.
 16 " I would have fed them with the finest wheat ;
 " With honey of the rock would I have satisfied them."

PSALM LXXXII.

THE design of this solemn address to princes, legislators, and magistrates, is too plain and forcible to require any explanation. When, or for what special purpose it was composed, we cannot determine ; but it is applicable to all times and places. It is delivered in the person of God, the Sovereign Lord of all worlds ; who is represented as standing up in an assembly of such dignified personages, and denouncing, with severe reprehension, their partiality, injustice, and oppression. Their criminal conduct is charged upon their ignorance ; not that this is to be literally understood, but their wicked passions, their avarice, and selfishness, had rendered them wilfully ignorant, by darkening their perceptions, and obstructing their discernment of their duty, and their responsibility to the awful Governor of the world. These men were elevated to such eminence and dignity as to be denominated " gods ;" the representatives and viceregents of the Deity : but they are told of their accountableness to him, with whom there is no acceptance of persons, but who exercises his righteous judgments equally upon the highest and the lowest of his creatures, who, in his sight, are all upon the same level, and will be judged by the same inflexible laws. Princes and magistrates are thus warned against the abuse of their power and dignity ; and may well expect a heavier doom to fall on them if they are found faithless and unjust. Legislators and magistrates of superior rank, and of incorruptible integrity, may justly be numbered among the chief blessings of nations and kingdoms ; but, when corrupt and unrighteous, they become the most dreadful scourges with which the Lord of all animadverts on the iniquities of mankind. Just judges are the firmest pillars of the social state ; but, when law and justice are polluted in these sources, it may well be

16. *With honey of the rock.*—i. e. Wild rocks, in great plenty, in Palestine. *Vide* or native honey, found in the crevices of Additional Notes.

said, "The foundations of the earth totter;" and there is no defence or solace for the injured and the destitute, but to betake themselves to Him who has the power and the will eventually to avenge their cause and his own.

A PSALM OF ASAPH.

- 1 God standeth in the assembly of the mighty :
In the midst of the gods he uttereth his decisions.
- 2 How long will ye decide unjustly ?
And accept the persons of the wicked ?
- 3 Determine the cause of the poor, and of the orphan :
Do justice for the afflicted and the destitute.
- 4 Rescue the poor and the forlorn ;
Out of the hand of the wicked deliver them.
- 5 They perceive not, neither do they discern :
They go on in darkness : all the foundations of the earth totter.
- 6 I have called you gods :
All of you, sons of the High God :
- 7 But ye shall die like an ordinary man ;
And like one of the chief men ye shall fall.
- 8 Arise, O God ! exercise justice over the earth :
For thou art the Possessor of all nations.

PSALM LXXXIII.

THERE is a high probability that the events which are recorded in 2 Chron. xx. formed the occasion on which this Psalm was written. The sacred history informs us, that a numerous and formidable confederacy, among the surrounding nations, was arranged against Jehoshaphat, the pious king of Judah, and his people. The particulars of this confederacy are stated at large, and an account is given of the means that were employed by Jehoshaphat to counteract it. The whole narrative is singularly interesting, and it is crowned by a relation of the signal triumph with which it pleased God to honour him, by setting his adversaries one against another, and making them the authors of their own discomfiture and ruin. A pregnant instance is thus set before us of the happy effects of unfeigned piety and sincere dependance upon God: while the adversaries of religion, and the opposers of good men, are instructed how little their wisdom and power avail when they are employed for purposes that tend to the injury of that cause which the Most High has pledged himself to support, and by the conducting of which to final success, his own intentions will be

answered, and his glorious perfections displayed in the sight of all intelligent beings. "His counsel will stand; and he will do all his pleasure."

A SONG. A PSALM OF ASAPH.

- 1 O God ! be not silent ; hold not thy peace :
Be not still, O mighty God !
- 2 For behold ! thy enemies are tumultuous :
And they who hate thee are lifting up the head.
- 3 They form a deep design against thy people ;
They hold consultations against them whom thou protectest.
- 4 They say, Come, let us destroy them, that they may cease to be
a nation ;
That the name of Israel may be remembered no more.
- 5 Verily they are consulting together with one heart ;
They enter into a covenant against thee.
- 6 The tents of Edom, and of the Ishmaelites ;
Of Moab, and of the Hagarenes ;
- 7 Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek ;
The Philistines, with the inhabitants of Tyre.
- 8 Assur is also united with them :
They are the strength of the sons of Lot.
- 9 Treat them like the Midianites ;
Like Sisera, like Jabin, at the brook of Kishon.
- 10 At Endor they were cut off ;
They were made manure for the earth.
- 11 Make their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb ;
Like Zebah, and Zalmunna, all their princes.
- 12 They are saying, We will possess ourselves
Of the habitations of God.
- 13 O, my God ! make them like a whirling ball ;
Like stubble before the wind.
- 14 As fire consumeth a forest,
And as flame kindleth the mountains,

6. *The Hagarenes.*—A people or tribe on the east of Gilead, in the vicinity of the Euphrates.

7. *Gebal.*—A district of Phenicia, in the neighbourhood of Tyre.

8. *Assur.*—Assyria.

9. *Kishon.*—*Vide* Jud. iv. 13.

11. *Oreb.*—*Vide* Jud. vii. 25 ; viii. 5, 10.

14. *Kindleth the mountains.*—*h. e.* The produce of the mountains, trees, plants, &c.

- 15 So pursue them with thy tempest ;
 And terrify them by thy storm.
 16 Fill their faces with shame ;
 That they may seek thy name, O Jehovah !
 17 Let them be ashamed, and terrified perpetually ;
 That they may be confounded, and perish.
 18 Then shall it be known that thou alone, whose name is Jehovah,
 Art the High God, over all the earth.

PSALM LXXXIV.

THIS expressive and beautiful Psalm was, as we are warranted to believe, composed by David, when he was sojourning at a distance from Jerusalem, whence he had been expelled by Absalom, and was deprived of the sacred pleasures of devotion in the sanctuary of God. The general strain of it greatly resembles that of the forty-second Psalm ; and, as both were written about the same period, so they concur in affording an affecting instance of David's fervent piety, and the strong affection for the service of God by which he was at all times animated.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. ON GITTITH. A PSALM FOR THE SONS OF KORAH.

- 1 How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Jehovah, God of Hosts !
 2 My soul longeth, it is even consumed with desire,
 For the courts of Jehovah :
 My heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.
 3 As the sparrow findeth a house, and the swallow a nest,

3. *As the sparrow, &c.*—The common opinion respecting this verse is, that it represents sparrows, &c. as building their nests in some parts of the sacred edifices. No other sense can indeed be drawn from the English Translation. But there are serious objections to this view of the matter. It is not in the least degree likely that any such lodgements were permitted within these consecrated precincts ; and even if they could have been allowed, there seems to be no reason why these birds should prefer this to other more commodious places, where they would not be

liable to the disturbance unavoidable here, as the concourse to the house of God was incessant and very great.

It is therefore clear, that the Psalmist expresses, in this poetic imagery, his strong desire to be readmitted to the sacred abode. The particles of similitude, "as" and "so," are not, indeed, in the original text ; but there are many instances in which they are omitted in Hebrew, but where it is necessary to supply them, in order to make an intelligible version. The sense of the passage thus taken is, as these birds delight

- Where she may place her offspring,
 So may thy altars be my abode, O Jehovah of Hosts !
 My King, and my God.
- 4 Blessed are they who dwell in thy house :
 Evermore they praise thee. SELAH.
- 5 Blessed is the man who reposeth on thee :
 Who delighteth in the ways *that lead to thy sanctuary*.
- 6 They who pass through the valley of Baca
 Make it a fountain ; the rain covereth it with blessings.
- 7 They make fresh accessions of strength ;
 They appear before God in Zion.
- 8 O Jehovah, God of Hosts ! hear my prayer :
 O God of Jacob ! hearken. SELAH.
- 9 Behold, O God ! our shield :
 Look upon the face of thy anointed :
- 10 For a day in thy courts excels a thousand other days.
 I had rather abide on the threshold of God,
 Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

in their appropriate abodes, and frequent them with constancy, so it is my earnest wish to be restored to the enjoyments which I have derived from a continued resort to thy house.

6. *Through the valley of Baca.*—This verse is extremely obscure ; so that no version can be given of it which is entirely free from objection. I take the meaning to be, in general, this, that the truly pious worshippers of God allowed no inconveniences or difficulties, many of which attended on travelling in Judea, to prevent their attendance on the solemn festivals at Jerusalem ; but that, on the contrary, their regard for these sacred rites was such, that the most rugged paths, through dry and barren deserts, were transformed, by their affectionate longing for the presence of God, into pleasant ways ; the thirsty valleys, irrigated by no streams and ornamented by no verdure, yet became fertile, irriguous, and delightful, by means of the associations which were connected with them in the minds

of these devout pilgrims, and through the sacred enjoyments which sprang from the divine influence and favour which were vouchsafed to them. A stanza in Addison's beautiful Paraphrase of the twenty-third Psalm expresses the precise notion of the Psalmist's words :—

“ Though in a bare and rugged way,
 Through devious lonely wilds I stray,
 His bounty will my pains beguile ;
 The barren wilderness shall smile ;
 With sudden green, and herbage crown'd,
 And streams shall murmur all around.”

—*Vide* Additional Notes.

9. *Look upon the face of thy anointed.*—David had been anointed king of Israel by the special appointment of God ; and he thus prays, that the favour which God had so frequently extended towards him might be renewed, and that he might be restored to the sacred converse with which it had pleased God to distinguish him in past times.

11 For Jehovah God is a sun, and a shield.

Jehovah giveth favour, and honour :

He withholdeth no good from those who walk uprightly.

12 O Jehovah of Hosts ! blessed is the man who trusteth in thee.

PSALM LXXXV.

SEVERAL periods in the history of the Israelitish nation have been fixed upon by different expositors, as being respectively the occasion of the writing of this Psalm. There does not, however, appear to me to be any material objection against the supposition that it is referable to some period subsequent to the return of the people from Babylon. It is, I think, more suitable to the circumstances in which they were at that time, than to any other to which it has been assigned.

The Psalm commences with acknowledgments of the mercy and goodness of God to his people, in restoring them from the captivity; it also offers fervent supplication for the continuance and perpetuity of the divine blessing. At ver. 8 the Psalmist introduces, as the subject of a divine communication that had been made to him, a special announcement, directed to his countrymen for their instruction, in order that it might prove an inducement to them to shun the iniquities and crimes which had brought on their predecessors such inexpressible calamities. By this communication the people are assured of the continuance of the divine favour; are reminded of the many benefits which they were now enjoying; and are urged to perseverance in keeping the commandments of God, as the sole means of averting a renewal of the evils by which their fathers and themselves had been so long and so grievously afflicted. The sacred writer then proceeds to describe, in a series of pleasing images, the prosperity with which they were at present favoured, and the increase of it which might be looked for from the divine benignity. A comparison of the concluding verses of the Psalm with what we know to have been the actual condition of the Jewish nation after the return from captivity, leads, I think, inevitably to a conclusion, that the advent of the Messiah is the great event which is here embellished by the delightful images that are brought together. Mercy and truth personified, and combined with the embraces of righteousness and peace, are represented as springing out of the earth, or descending from the celestial abodes, to bestow their respective blessings on the sons of men. By this appearance of the King of righteousness and peace, which had so long

11. *Giveth favour and honour.*]—The common gloss on these words is, that God first bestows grace on earth and then glory in heaven. But this is an interpretation of the ear rather than of the understanding. The writer is evidently

speaking of the present happy consequences of walking uprightly, as he immediately says. The judgment of Calvin agrees with this statement. His words will be found in the Additional Notes.

been foretold, not only the descendants of Israel were to be blessed, but all the nations of the earth, from the rising of the sun to its going down.

We shall look in vain to the secular history of the Jewish people, between the return from Babylon to the coming of Christ, for any events to which this description of the Psalm can with any shew of propriety be applied. In the course of this period the Jews never recovered, in any tolerable degree, the splendour and prosperity which they had enjoyed in the reigns of David and Solomon. Their numbers certainly increased to a great extent, and they were favoured with many instances of the divine regard; but they were exposed to several revolutions, and often to great sufferings, under the influence of the several monarchies that succeeded the death of Alexander the Great; they endured great changes, which were accompanied by inexpressible calamities, from their connexions with Egypt, Syria, &c., until they were completely reduced under the dominion of the all-pervading sway of the Roman empire. From such considerations I am fully persuaded, that we shall entertain very erroneous and unjust conceptions of the latter part of this Psalm, unless we interpret it of that spiritual and everlasting monarchy, which the God of heaven, many ages before, had declared it to be his design to set up. Of the immortal King who presides over this monarchy, it may be said emphatically and alone, that "Righteousness shall go before him, and direct us in the way of his steps."

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. A PSALM FOR THE SONS OF KORAH.

- 1 O JEHOVAH! thou hast favoured thy land :
Thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.
- 2 Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people :
Thou hast covered all their sin. SELAH.
- 3 Thou hast withdrawn all thy wrath ;
And hast turned away from thy hot indignation.
- 4 Turn us, O God of our salvation !
And cause thy anger against us to cease.
- 5 Wilt thou be wroth with us for ever ?
Wilt thou prolong thy displeasure to all ages ?
- 6 Wilt thou not revive us again,
That thy people may rejoice in thee ?
- 7 Shew us, O Jehovah ! thy mercy ;
And grant us thy salvation.
- 8 I will listen to what the God, Jehovah, speaketh :

4. *Turn us, &c.*—*i. e.* As the ancient version and interpreters explain it, "restore us to a condition of prosperity."

5. *Wilt thou be wroth, &c.*—This is

equivalent with saying, Thou wilt not, &c. Thy covenant, thy faithfulness to thy promises forbid it.

8. *I will listen, &c.*—The poet

- Surely he speaketh peace to his people, and to his saints :
 But let them not turn again to folly.
- 9 Verily his salvation is near to them that fear him,
 So that glory may dwell in our land.
- 10 Mercy and truth are meeting together ;
 Righteousness and peace are kissing each other.
- 11 Truth is springing out of the earth :
 Righteousness is looking down from heaven.
- 12 Jehovah is granting prosperity :
 And our land yieldeth her increase.
- 13 Righteousness is going before him ;
 And directeth us in the way of his steps.

PSALM LXXXVI.

THE devout and fervent poem which we have now to consider was written by David, probably during some part of the persecution which he suffered from Saul; though there are no indications given in it which determine it to any assignable period. It contains a series of complaints and requests, such as the exigencies of David's condition frequently drew from him; and celebrates, in very impressive terms, the power, truth, and compassion of God. The Psalm is replete with sentiments which adapt it to the attention of pious sufferers, as it brings before them characteristics of the supreme benevolence and condescending regard of the Most High, which are admirably suited to support their hopes and to inspire them with inexpressible satisfaction, while they revolve them within their bosoms, and make them the subjects of their deep and assiduous meditation.

represents himself as if hearing the voice of God, which responded to his requests, and instructed him to say, "Let them not turn again to folly.

9. *So that glory, &c.*—The glory that is here spoken of is that which was formerly enjoyed, when they were surrounded on all sides by prosperity; and when especially they were favoured with the tokens of the divine presence, in the performance of all the instituted worship of the sanctuary, when the ark, the temple, &c., were in their pristine beauty and splendour.

10. *Mercy and truth, &c.*—Bishop Lowth, in illustrating this passage, says, "Quid illa apud Psaltem," &c.; *scil.* "What judgment shall we form of this prosopopœia, or personification of the divine attributes?" If we interpret it in harmony with its manifest and appropriate subject, it is just, elegant, and splendid; but if we refer it to the diviner meaning which is clearly adumbrated by this image, it is great and lofty in the highest degree, and most replete with mystery and sublimity.—*Prelec.* xiii.

A PRAYER OF DAVID.

- 1 INCLINE thy ear, O Jehovah ! answer me ;
For I am afflicted, and destitute.
- 2 Preserve me, for I am a partaker of thy mercy :
O my God ! save thy servant who relieth upon thee.
- 3 Be merciful to me, O Lord !
For unto thee do I cry all the day.
- 4 Make glad the soul of thy servant ;
For unto thee, O Lord ! do I lift up my desire.
- 5 Thou, O Lord ! art good, and forgiving,
And abounding in mercy, to all who call upon thee.
- 6 Listen, O Jehovah ! to my prayer ;
And attend to the voice of my supplications.
- 7 In the day of my distress, I call upon thee ;
For thou wilt answer me.
- 8 Among the Gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord !
Neither are there any works like thine.
- 9 All the nations which thou hast made shall come ;
They shall prostrate themselves before thee, O Lord !
And glorify thy name.
- 10 For thou art great, and doest wondrous things :
Even thou, O God ! alone.
- 11 Teach me thy way, O Jehovah ! that I may walk in thy truth :
Direct my thoughts, that I may fear thy name.
- 12 I will praise thee, O Lord, my God ! with all my heart :
And I will glorify thy name for evermore :
- 13 For thy mercy is great towards me ;
Thou hast rescued me from the depths of Hades.
- 14 O God ! the proud rise up against me :

11. *Direct my thoughts.*]—The English translation is, “unite my heart,” which, though a literal version, gives a very indistinct notion to the reader. The heart is very frequently used for the intellectual faculties, the exercise of the thoughts. The verb which is used is expressive of combination, arrangement,

&c. The circumstances in which David now was, were extremely harassing, distracting the thoughts, and agitating the passions and feelings; all which had a powerful influence to divert attention from the unseen object of his worship; he therefore implores a heavenly influence to govern his thoughts aright.

Assemblies of violent men seek after my life ;

And they set not thee before them.

15 But thou, O Lord ! art God, full of compassion, and gracious,
Long suffering, and abounding in mercy and truth.

16 Turn towards me, and be gracious to me :

Give thy strength to thy servant ;

And save the son of thy handmaid.

17 Afford me a proof of thy goodness ;

That they who hate me may see it, and be ashamed :

Because thou, O Lord ! art my helper, and my comforter.

PSALM LXXXVII.

THE learned critics, Rosenmüller and Dathe, both speak in commendation of the opinion of Muller respecting the occasion on which this Psalm was written. He supposes it to have taken place after the miraculous destruction of Sennacherib's army, in the reign of Hezekiah, when the kings of the surrounding countries sent embassies to Jerusalem, to congratulate that pious prince on the remarkable deliverance which had been afforded to him from so formidable an enemy. But we may, I think, hesitate respecting the propriety of this conclusion : at any rate, it is built upon premises which are very precarious, and afford little satisfaction. There are, indeed, no data on which any reasonable opinion can be formed upon the subject ; but critical interpreters, as well as some who are not critical, are apt, not unfrequently, to hang their conjectures on very insufficient supports. It is better to acquiesce in our ignorance, when we have no means sufficient to dispel it but those of fanciful coincidences.

From the contents of the Psalm itself, however, we are able to determine, that the purpose for which it was written was to predict the increase and glory of the church of God by numerous converts, brought into its bosom from the gentile nations. The poet commences with a glowing commendation of the honours which were conferred upon Zion, and which originated in the preference that God was pleased to exercise towards the seat of his solemn and public worship. He then proceeds to what is manifestly the chief design of the Psalm, to announce the numbers of gentiles who should be introduced into the unity and communion of the church. We cannot err in applying these predictions to the kingdom of the Messiah, and to the spiritual Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the church of Christ, which is to consist of " a multitude that no man can number, redeemed out of every nation, and kindred, and tongue." The individual accessions which are to be made to this general assembly and church of the first-born, are represented as receiving their heavenly birth in the church, as being enrolled by the hand of God in the

book of life, and destined to share in the honours and blessedness with which he will finally establish and confirm his church for ever.

A PSALM. A SONG. FOR THE SONS OF KORAH.

- 1, 2 **JEHOVAH** loveth the gates of Zion,
 The city which he hath founded upon the holy mountains,
 More than all the dwellings of Jacob.
- 3 Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God ! **SELAH.**
- 4 I will mention Rahab, and Babylon, among them that know me.
 Behold Philistia, and Tyre, and Ethiopia, every one was born
 there !
- 5 Wherefore it shall be said of Zion, This and this man was born
 in her :
 And the High God will establish her.
- 6 Jehovah will recount when he numbereth the people ;
 " Every one was born there." **SELAH.**
- 7 They sing with musical instruments, " all my springs are in
 thee."

1. *Jehovah loveth, &c.*—A slight transposition of the original words is adopted here, in order to remove the abruptness and obscurity of the English translation, " His foundation," &c. Taken either way the sense is the same, and cannot well be mistaken.

3. *Glorious things, &c.*—These are the predictions which follow, relating to the increase and growing extent of the church.

4. *I will mention.*—These are the words of God, whom the Psalmist represents as declaring to his servants, " them that know him," his design of bringing converts from Rahab, *scil.* Egypt, Palestine, &c. Respecting these converts, he says, They are all born in the church, and entitled to all the advantages of citizenship in the city of God.

5. *Wherefore it shall be said, &c.*—The Psalmist here speaks, and delivers a solemn repetition of the words of God.

7. *They sing, &c.*—The persons who are here said to sing, accompanied by musical instruments, are the people spoken of in ver. 6. They are described as uniting in a joyful song of praise and thanksgiving, and the burden of their song is, " All my springs are in thee." Springs or fountains are a constant image for the blessings which are productive of refreshment and happiness. These new-born converts are, therefore, represented as joining the universal church, and offering ascriptions of praise to God, who is the everflowing source of all the streams of good, which refresh and bless his people.

PSALM LXXXVIII.

It is contended, by some interpreters, that this Psalm relates to Uzziah, king of Judah, who was affected to the time of his death by an incurable leprosy; a judgment which was inflicted upon him for his presumption in daring to usurp the priestly office, by burning incense in the temple. There are several expressions in the Psalm which agree very well with this supposition. The account which the sacred historian gives, 2 Chron. xxvi. 21, of the condition of this prince, is, that "Uzziah the king was a leper to the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper: for he was cut off from the house of the Lord: and Jotham his son was over the King's house, judging the people of the land." This account very strongly resembles that which we have in the Psalm, ver. 8. Another opinion relative to the Psalm is, that it is applicable to no individual, but is descriptive of the afflicted condition of the Jewish people at large, figuratively represented as a single person. Such is the statement of Jarchi, with which Rosenmüller concurs. No argument of any material force can be urged in support of either of these opinions. The former, indeed, is more likely to be just than the latter, which has not even a shadow of support, though it appears to be a favourite hypothesis with several modern critics; and one which they apply very freely to many of the Psalms. There is, however, so little, or rather no ground, on which to build any judgment respecting the person to whom this poem relates, that it seems to me to be preferable to come to no determination on the subject.

It appears, from an inspection of the Psalm, that it was the production of a person of real and fervent piety; sufficient indications of which are afforded by the pathetic supplications which are found in it, and the entire absence of any unjustifiable reflections upon the Most High, for subjecting him to so lamentable a state. A more affecting picture of extreme anguish and inconsolable grief cannot be imagined: the most doleful images are used by the writer to represent his deplorable condition, and he abruptly terminates his sad meditation by one of the most piteous exclamations that ever escaped the lips of an afflicted mortal: "Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and the darkness (of death) is my (sole) associate." We may conclude, in general, that the Psalm is the work of a person of sincere piety and religion; that he was affected by some frightful malady, which at length banished all his friends from his presence; and that his disease was attended by the harassing fears and terrific gloom which, it is well known, are the concomitants of some severe corporeal and mental ailments. Numbers of persons, of undoubted piety, have been affected in such a way in all ages; the most deplorable condition of suffering humanity, more to be dreaded than death itself. Yet it has been the inscrutable will of the Most High God, the only wise and good, to permit not a few of his servants to walk a great part of their mortal pilgrimage through this "valley of the shadow of death." How blessed must be their condition, and how exquisite their sensations, when they awake from this dream of horrors, and find themselves encircled by the felicity of that

heaven, of the attainment of which they had despaired; and illumined by the beatific vision of that God whom they had pictured to themselves as being irreconcilably indignant against them!

A SONG. A PSALM. FOR THE SONS OF KORAH. TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. ON MAHALATH LEANNOH, (AN INSTRUMENT OF MUSIC.) MASCHIL OF HEMAN, THE EZRAHITE.

- 1 O JEHOVAH! God of my salvation!
I call on thee by day; by night is my cry before thee.
- 2 Let my prayer enter into thy presence:
Incline thy ear to my cry.
- 3 For my soul is full of troubles;
And my life is drawing nigh to Hades.
- 4 I am numbered with them who go down to the pit:
I resemble a man that hath no strength,
- 5 Enfeebled among the dead, like the slain who lie in the grave;
Whom thou no longer rememberest; deprived of thy protection.
- 6 Thou hast laid me in the deepest pit;
In darkness, in abysses.
- 7 Thy anger presseth upon me;
And with all thy waves, thou troublest me. SELAH.
- 8 Thou removest my acquaintance far from me:
Thou makest me disgusting to them:
I am shut up, I cannot go forth.
- 9 My eye languisheth through misery:
I invoke thee, O Jehovah! daily I spread out my hands to thee.
- 10 Wilt thou perform wonders for the dead?
Shall the departed arise to praise thee? SELAH.

5. *Enfeebled.*—*Vide* Additional Notes.
— *Deprived of thy protection.* Literally this is, *They are cut off from thy hand.*—The version here adopted gives the exact sense, more clearly and unequivocally.

7. *All thy waves, &c.*—Tumultuous waters, and roaring billows, are a pregnant type of great distress.

8. *Disgusting to them.*—He means either that the character of his disease was such that men could not endure to be near him, or that the state of his mind was so disordered that he became wear-

some and intolerable; perhaps he includes both.

— *I am shut up.*—Either his state of feeling was such as induced him to withdraw himself altogether from society, or he was so environed by hopeless misery, that he regarded himself as a wretch confined in a dungeon, whence he could not escape.

10. *Wilt thou perform, &c.*—This is an argument used to prevail on God speedily to help him; as if he had said, "I am at the point of death, rescue me before I go

- 11 Shall thy loving-kindness be proclaimed in the grave?
Thy faithfulness in the abyss?
- 12 Shall thy wonders be known in darkness?
Thy righteousness in a land of forgetfulness?
- 13 As for me, to thee, O Jehovah! is my cry:
In the morning my prayer is before thee.
- 14 Wherefore, O Jehovah! dost thou reject me?
Dost thou hide thy face from me?
- 15 I am afflicted; expiring from my youth,
I suffer thy terrors; I am distracted.
- 16 Thy burning indignation passeth over me:
Thy horrors destroy me.
- 17 Daily do they encompass me; like waters
They surround me on every side.
- 18 Lover, and friend, hast thou put far from me:
The darkness of death is my associate!

PSALM LXXXIX.

SEVERAL expositors of great eminence are of opinion that this interesting Psalm is to be referred to the reign of Hezekiah, when the people of Israel and their excellent king were treated with the utmost indignity by Sennacherib, the powerful king of Assyria. There are, however, as it seems to me, indications in the Psalm itself, that it belongs to a later period, though it is impossible to define, with exactness, the precise time when it was written. The language that is used to describe the desolation and ruin which had come upon the land, from ver. 38 to ver. 45, is, in my apprehension, too strong to admit of this conjecture, as it closely resembles that which is employed in Psalms LXXIV. and LXXIX., and which, there can be little doubt, is applicable to the destruction of the kingdom by Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. At all events, not to occupy more space in the discussion of a question which we

hence, for there is no hope beyond the grave."

13. *In the morning.*]—An indication of the fervency of his devotion.

15. *Expiring from my youth.*]—From my entrance upon life, thy terrors, the

dreadful apprehensions of thy vengeance have affrighted me,

"Wretch even then, life's journey just begun."—COWPER.

18. *The darkness of death.*]—i. e. A deadly darkness is my sole associate.

cannot completely answer, it is quite certain that the Psalm was composed during a season of extreme distress. It is written in the person of some one of the descendants and successors of David, and commences with a determination to celebrate the works and wonders of God; which topic is prolonged down to ver. 37, and an account is given of the great promises which had been made to David and to his race. This constitutes the first part of the Psalm; the second part commences with a description of the very forlorn and unhappy condition of the country, and an expostulation with God respecting the alteration of his conduct towards his people. The royal writer then proceeds anxiously to inquire if this state of misery and dejection is to continue without relief, and to implore the help of God to be speedily extended to him, by a reference to the brevity of life, and the blasphemous aspersions which were cast, by the victorious enemy, both upon God himself and upon his people.

There is a very obvious and important observation to be made on the description of the apparent change that had taken place in the conduct of God towards the family and descendants of David. The extraordinary promises which had been given to that prince were certainly not accomplished in the fortunes of his descendants, the kings of Judah; nor shall we be able to discover how the truth of those promises is to be sustained, without an admission of their being given in reference to the Messiah, that spiritual King, who "was born of the seed of David, according to the flesh." When we take the assurances which were made to David, and which pledged to him the perpetuity of his kingdom, in this sense, the mystery is disclosed, and the difficulty is completely removed: "the loving-kindness of God has not been withdrawn from him, nor has his faithfulness failed." David has still a royal successor, though the genealogy of his posterity is lost upon earth; a successor, who will endure for ever, and whose throne will be perpetuated in glory, not merely as long as the sun and the moon continue, but will still be rising in splendour, when these lights of heaven shall be extinguished, and the new heavens and the new earth shall witness the imperishable glories of the Son of David.

MASCHIL, OF ETHAN, THE EZRAHITE.

1 I WILL celebrate the mercies of Jehovah for ever:

To succeeding ages will I make known, with my mouth, thy faithfulness.

2 Therefore I have said, Mercy will be built up to the heavens for ever:

Thy faithfulness thou wilt establish in them.

3 "I have made a covenant with my chosen:

"I have sworn unto David my servant;

2. *Will be built up.*—Elevated like a stupendous edifice, whose head is in the clouds.

- 4 "Thy seed will I establish for ever ;
 "Thy throne will I build up through all ages." SELAH.
- 5 The heavens shall praise thy wondrous work, O Jehovah !
 Surely thy faithfulness will be praised in the assembly of thy
 saints.
- 6 For who in heaven may be compared to Jehovah ?
 Who among the sons of the mighty is like to Jehovah ?
- 7 God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints ;
 And to be venerated by all who are around him.
- 8 O Jehovah, God of Hosts ! who is mighty like thee, O Jah !
 Thy faithfulness is on every side of thee.
- 9 Thou governest the raging of the sea ;
 When its waves rise up, thou restrainest them.
- 10 Thou didst bruise Rahab, as one that is slain :
 Thou scatteredst thy enemies by thy mighty arm.
- 11 The heavens are thine ; the earth is also thine ;
 The world and its fulness thou didst establish.
- 12 The north, and the south, thou hast created :
 Tabor and Hermon rejoice in thy name.
- 13 Mighty is thy arm ; strong is thy hand ;
 Thy right hand is exalted.
- 14 Justice and judgment are the basis of thy throne :
 Mercy and truth go before thy face.
- 15 Blessed are the people who hear the trumpet-sound !
 They walk, O Jehovah ! in the light of thy presence.
- 16 In thy name they rejoice all the day ;
 And in thy righteousness they are exalted.
- 17 For thou art the glory of their strength :
 And by thy favour our horn is exalted.
- 18 For Jehovah is our defence :
 And the Holy One of Israel is our King.

10. *Rahab.*]—Egypt.

12. *Tabor and Hermon.*]—Two mountains, which the Chaldee interpreter takes figuratively for the east and the west. Tabor is on the western side of Galilee. Hermon, or Antilibanus, on the north-east. These mountains are proofs of God's great

power, and are represented as rejoicing in his name, by the witness which they give to his creative skill and energy.

15. *The trumpet-sound.*]—A sound of joy and festivity. The people were summoned to the great festivals by the blowing of trumpets.

- 19 Thou didst speak formerly in vision to thy favoured one ; thou
 saidst,
 I have imparted power to a mighty man ;
 I have exalted a man, chosen from among the people.
- 20 I have found David my servant ;
 With my holy oil have I anointed him.
- 21 Him my hand hath established :
 And my arm hath made him strong.
- 22 The enemy shall not make him subservient :
 Nor shall the son of wickedness afflict him.
- 23 I will beat down his foes before his face ;
 And I will inflict plagues upon them that hate him.
- 24 But my truth and my mercy shall abide with him ;
 And by my name shall his horn be exalted.
- 25 His hand will I place over the sea ;
 His right hand over the rivers.
- 26 He shall call out to me, my Father ! my God art thou,
 And the rock of my salvation.
- 27 I will also make him my first-born,
 Higher than the kings of the earth.
- 28 My mercy will I reserve for him for ever ;
 And my covenant shall be sure to him.
- 29 I will establish his seed for ever ;
 And his throne as the days of heaven.
- 30 If his children forsake my law,
 And walk not according to my precepts ;
- 31 If they violate my statutes,
 And keep not my commandments ;
- 32 I will visit their transgression with the rod,
 And their iniquity with stripes :
- 33 But my loving-kindness I will not withdraw from him ;
 Nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.

19. *Thou didst speak.*—The history to which this is a reference is contained in 2 Sam. vii.

22. *Son of wickedness.*—Any evil, malevolent person.

25. *Over the sea.*—His dominion shall

spread from the sea, on the west of Palestine, to the great rivers Euphrates, &c. on the east.

27. *My first-born.*—i. e. I will adopt him as my eldest son, and place him next in dignity to myself.

- 34 My covenant will I not break ;
Nor alter that which hath gone forth from my lips.
- 35 Once have I sworn by my holiness,
That I will not lie unto David.
- 36 His seed shall endure for ever :
His throne shall be as the sun before me.
- 37 It shall be established for ever, like the moon :
As the sure witness in the cloud. SELAH.
- 38 But thou hast rejected and abhorred thy anointed ;
Thou hast been incensed against him.
- 39 Thou hast annulled the covenant with thy servant :
Thou hast profaned his crown by casting it upon the ground.
- 40 Thou hast broken down all his fences ;
Thou hast made his strong places a ruin.
- 41 All that pass by the way plunder him :
He is a subject of reproach to his neighbours.
- 42 Thou hast exalted the right hand of his adversaries :
Thou hast caused all his enemies to rejoice.
- 43 Thou hast, moreover, turned the edge of his sword ;
And hast not supported him in battle.
- 44 Thou hast caused his splendour to fail ;
Thou hast cast down his throne to the ground.
- 45 The days of his youth thou hast shortened :
Thou hast covered him with disgrace. SELAH.
- 46 How long, O Jehovah ! wilt thou hide thyself ? for ever ?
Shall thy fury burn like fire ?
- 47 Remember how short is my time !
Why hast thou created all men in vain ?
- 48 What man liveth, and seeth not death ?
Who is able to rescue his life from the hand of Hades ? SELAH.

35. *Once.*]—Emphatic. It needs not to be repeated : nor will be.

37. *Sure witness in the cloud.*]—A reference to the rainbow, which God had appointed to be a witness, or pledge of his sure covenant with Noah.

45. *The days of his youth.*]—This may be taken, figuratively, for the untimely

ruin and decay which had befallen the kingdom and its princes ; or, if literally understood, it may be a reference to the short lives and reigns of the latter kings of Judah.

47. *All men in vain.*]—Why hast thou rendered human life a mere empty and unsubstantial appearance ?

- 49 Where are thy former loving-kindnesses, O Lord?
 Which thou didst pledge by thy oath, and thy truth, unto David?
 50 Remember, O Lord! the reproach which is cast on thy servants;
 Which I bear in my bosom from all the numerous people:
 51 With which thy enemies blaspheme thee, O Jehovah!
 With which they blaspheme the procedure of thy anointed.
 52 Blessed be Jehovah, for ever! Amen, and Amen.

PSALM XC.

THE inscription of this Psalm assigns it to Moses: many, however, of the commentators are of opinion that the title is of very doubtful authority. There is certainly nothing contained in the Psalm that is peculiarly appropriate to the character or the times of the great Hebrew Legislator. It is a very grave meditation, adapted to all times, and places, and persons, represented in most plaintive language, upon the eternity and majesty of God, upon the sinfulness and mortality of man, and upon the inexpressibly vain and transient nature of his present condition. These reflections are illustrated by very affecting images, and are used as the means of leading us to cultivate that genuine wisdom which alone can compensate the brevity and sorrow of life, by conducting us to a condition of existence, whence all these sources of grief will be for ever excluded. There is, indeed, no explicit indication of a future life contained in the Psalm, yet few persons of tolerable discernment can, I imagine, attentively peruse it without a persuasion that such a life was not altogether beyond the thoughts and expectations of the writer. It was not agreeable to the character of the Old Testament to make very express or frequent references to that state of existence which, however, from several passages in the Psalms and other parts of the sacred volume, we are assured was looked for by the pious and enlightened Hebrews. It has been suggested by some interpreters, that, if this Psalm be looked upon as a production of Moses, it was probably written when the forty years were near their conclusion, during which the Israelites had been doomed to wander in the wilderness, until the whole, with one or two exceptions, of the men who came forth from Egypt had become the victims of death. If this were the case, the feelings of Moses must have been greatly excited when he wrote the Psalm; as he had witnessed the mournful desolation that swept away all his contemporaries, and was himself forbidden to enter into the land of promise, to the confines of which, under the pressure of innumerable difficulties, he had conducted the multitudes who were on the point of taking possession of that goodly inheritance.

50. *I bear in my bosom.*—*scil.* I suffer inward pain and anguish from the crimes which I behold, and the miseries that have overwhelmed my country.

A PRAYER OF MOSES, THE MAN OF GOD.

- 1 O LORD ! thou art our refuge,
Throughout all ages.
- 2 Before the mountains were brought forth ;
Or thou hadst formed the earth, and the world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.
- 3 Thou turnest man to destruction :
Thou sayest, " Return ye children of men."
- 4 For a thousand years, in thy sight, are as yesterday
When it is gone ; and as a watch in the night.
- 5 Thou bearest them away ; they resemble a sleep.
In the morning they are like grass which springeth up :
- 6 In the morning it flowreth, and springeth up ;
At evening it is cut down, and withereth.
- 7 Surely we are consumed by thy anger ;
And by thy indignation we are affrighted.
- 8 Thou settest our iniquities before thee ;
Our secret faults in the light of thy countenance.
- 9 For our days all vanish by thy displeasure :
Our years we spend like a fleeting breath.
- 10 The days of our years are threescore years and ten :
And if, through strength, they are fourscore years,
Yet is their pride labour and grief ;
For it is speedily cut off, and we fly away.
- 11 Who knoweth the power of thy anger ?
Or of thy indignation, so as to fear thee aright ?

2. *The earth, and the world.*]—The latter of these words properly means, the habitable world ; that part of the earth which, by its fertility, is capable of supporting inhabitants.

4. *As a watch.*]—*scil.* Four hours ; a third part of the night.

5. *A sleep.*]—When life has passed away, it appears to be as short as the time which is spent in sound sleep seems to have been. A serious consideration

for those who place their dependance on the long continuance of life !

11. *So as to fear thee aright.* English Translation, *According to thy fear, so is thy wrath.*]—This version has the appearance of being very literal and exact ; but it must, I think, have appeared to attentive readers very obscure. The version here given is at any rate intelligible, and conveys, I believe, the true meaning of the text.

- 12 Teach us so to number our days,
That we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.
- 13 Return to us, O Jehovah ! how long *wilt thou be angry?*
And shew compassion to thy servants.
- 14 Satisfy us early with thy mercy ;
That we may be glad, and rejoice all our days. [us ;
- 15 Make us joyful, according to the days in which thou hast afflicted
And the years in which we have seen evil.
- 16 Let thy work be shown to thy servants ;
And thy glory to their children.
- 17 And let the favour of Jehovah our God be upon us ;
And establish thou the work of our hands for us :
The work of our hands establish thou it.

PSALM XCI.

THE beautiful and consolatory Psalm which we have now to consider is without any inscription, nor is there any thing contained in it which enables us to determine by whom it was written, or the time or occasion to which we are indebted for it. There is, however, no reason to regret our unacquaintedness with these particulars, as the poem is so clear and intelligible, that nothing in it can be mistaken or misunderstood. The purpose of it is to illustrate the safety and happiness which result from the knowledge of God and the exercise of a stedfast dependance upon his promises and grace. The sentiments are expressed with great force and beauty ; and dead indeed must be the soul, to every emotion of spiritual and heavenly delight, that fails to be impressed by its truth, or to aim at the acquirement of such faith and reliance upon it as will alone render it productive of the peace and tranquillity of mind which it is intended to bestow. A cordial reception of its truth, and a continued application of it to its sacred purposes, will enable us to live free from anxiety, and to rise above all painful apprehensions relative to our present welfare or to our future and immortal happiness. It can scarcely fail to be observed, that there is more than one change of the persons who are introduced as delivering their sentiments on the interesting theme. The learned Michaelis is of opinion that the Psalm was to be recited in alternate parts, by two choruses or sets of singers, responding to each other, and that God himself is introduced, in ver. 14, as taking part of the performance.

16. *Let thy work.*]—This means, Let thy help, thy gracious assistance, be afforded to us, that our undertakings may succeed and prosper.

- 1 WHoso dwelleth in the retreat of the High God,
He abideth under the shadow of the Almighty.
- 2 "Jehovah," he saith, "is my refuge and my fortress,"
"My God, in him is my trust."
- 3 Surely he will deliver thee from the snare of the fowler,
From the destructive pestilence.
- 4 He will cover thee with his feathers ;
And under his wings shalt thou take refuge :
His truth is thy shield and buckler.
- 5 Be not thou afraid of terror by night,
Of the arrow that flieth by day,
- 6 Of the pestilence which walketh in darkness,
Of the destruction that wasteth at noon-day :
- 7 A thousand may fall by thy side,
And ten thousand at thy right hand,
To thee it shall not approach :
- 8 Only with thy eyes thou shalt behold,
Thou shalt see the recompense of the wicked.
- 9 Because thou hast made Jehovah, who is my refuge,
The High God, thy place of defence,
- 10 No evil shall befall thee,
No plague shall approach thy tent.
- 11 For he will give his angels a charge concerning thee,
To preserve thee in all thy ways.
- 12 Upon their hands they shall carry thee,
That thou mayest not dash thy foot against a stone.
- 13 Thou mayest tread upon the lion, and the asp ;
Thou mayest trample on the young lion, and on the huge serpent.
- 14 Because he fixeth his desire upon me, I will deliver him ;
I will set him on high, because he knoweth my name.

1. *The retreat, &c.*] — The power and providence of God are here represented by the image of a strong and impregnable fortress, under the protection of which every one that confideth in him is sheltered from all real harm.

14. *Because he knoweth my name.*] —

This is a Hebraism, by which the sentiment announced in the first clause of the verse is repeated in different terms in the second. To "know the name of God" has before been explained to mean, approving and loving the supreme excellency of his character.

15 He may call upon me, and I will answer him :

I will be with him in trouble, to rescue him, and honour him.

16 With long life will I satisfy him ;

I will show him my salvation.

PSALM XCII.

THE inscription which is prefixed to this song of praise, "A Psalm for the day of the Sabbath," is quite in agreement with the tenor of it. The sabbath was instituted in order that men might contemplate and adore the divine perfections, which are conspicuously displayed in the creation of the world and in the moral government which is exercised over it. An ancient tradition ascribes the composition of this Psalm to Adam; but we may justly regard this as a fable, which is supported by no higher authority than that of Jewish invention and fancy; no other can, indeed, be found for it. The Psalm opens with a declaration of the sacred delight with which the praises of God are celebrated by pure and upright minds, since no others can derive pleasure from an employment so little in unison with their predominant feelings and affections. After glancing at the manner in which praise was to be offered by a combination of instrumental with vocal music, the inspired author proceeds to illustrate the magnitude and often mysterious procedure of Providence in directing the affairs of men; and notices the stupid negligence and impious disregard which ignorant and foolish men display in relation to the stupendous theme. The Psalm goes on to predict the final glory of the divine government in the overthrow and dispersion of its enemies and despisers, and indicates the refreshment and satisfaction which will be experienced by the servants of God when they shall witness the sequel of his dispensations towards mankind. The concluding verses pass an elegant eulogium upon the pious and upright worshippers of God, and add an assurance that they shall go on to advance in virtues and honours, by which the rectitude and perfection of God will be triumphantly asserted and displayed.

A PSALM. A SONG FOR THE DAY OF THE SABBATH.

1 IT is pleasant to give thanks to Jehovah :

And to celebrate thy name, O thou High One !

16. *With long life, &c.*] — This was a blessing often pledged to good men during the Mosaic dispensation; though we cannot understand it as being universally accomplished, because God at that, as at every subsequent period, has reserved to himself, and to his own wisdom, "the times and the seasons."

- 2 To declare thy loving-kindness in the morning,
And at night thy faithfulness ;
- 3 On an instrument of ten strings, and on the lute,
Upon the harp, with a song :
- 4 For thou, O Jehovah ! makest me glad by thy work :
I will celebrate the doings of thy hand.
- 5 O Jehovah ! how great are thy works :
Thy thoughts are exceedingly profound.
- 6 A stupid man knoweth not,
Nor doth a fool understand this :
- 7 When the wicked spring like the grass,
When all the workers of iniquity flourish,
The end is, their destruction for ever.
- 8 But thou, O Jehovah ! art exalted to eternity !
- 9 For lo ! thy enemies, O Jehovah ! for lo ! thy enemies shall perish :
All the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.
- 10 But my horn thou wilt lift up, like an antelope's ;
I shall be anointed with fresh oil.
- 11 My eye shall look upon the ruin of my enemies ;
My ear shall hear of the destruction of the wicked, who oppose me.
- 12 The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree :
He shall grow as a cedar of Lebanon.
- 13 They that are planted in the house of Jehovah,
Shall flourish in the courts of our God.

4. *By thy work.*]—The work chiefly intended appears, from what follows, to be the work of Providence, in the equitable arrangements and dispensations which relate to the condition of men.

6. *A stupid man.*]—The epithet marks not so much the want of understanding as the absence of a considerate, upright, and pious disposition. So also “a fool” means an irreligious and profane person.

10. *An antelope's.*]—After discussing the various accounts which are given of this animal by ancient and modern writers, Winer says, I do not hesitate to say, it is the Antelope *Leucoryx*, a species of goat with long and sharp horns.

— *With fresh oil.*]—An image taken

from the use of fragrant unguents, with which the person was anointed for purposes of refreshment and delight.

12. *The palm tree.*]—The palm and cedar are used to depict the beauty and prosperity of the righteous. Both these trees are long-lived, and flourish in all seasons: the palm is distinguished by its fruitfulness, the cedar by its wide umbrageous branches and boughs. The righteous are made to remember the fruitfulness and beauty of these trees, that in them God's great goodness, and the truth of his promises, may be made known to all his servants, who glorify him by a constant and pious regard to all his institutions and appointments.

- 14 They shall still be fruitful in old age
They shall be fat, and flourishing.
- 15 They shall show that Jehovah, my rock, is upright ;
And that in him there is no unrighteousness.

PSALM XCIII.

WE have nothing to direct us in determining when this Psalm was written, or who is the author of it. Still we are at no loss to determine what was the chief design of it, as it describes with great sublimity the universal dominion, the eternal nature, and the uncontrollable might of the living Jehovah. In the judgment of many interpreters it is regarded as a prophetic annunciation of the unchangeable kingdom and glory of the Messiah. I do not discern in it any certain characters to limit it to this purpose ; at the same time, it appears to me that we may, without any conceivable impropriety, apply it to that illustrious Saviour, who is " God over all, blessed for ever ;" and whose design in coming into the world was to manifest, with unparalleled clearness and force, the moral perfection and universal government of God his Father.

The Psalm, thus understood, is adapted to confirm within the bosoms of Christians a devout and holy regard to the divine Redeemer, to whom all the glory and majesty of the Deity belong. It cannot be questioned that the significance and excellency of the gospel are proportioned to the dignity of the Saviour by whom it was promulgated, and who yielded up his life to accomplish its purposes ; every representation, therefore, that tends to diminish the glory of Christ, proportionably diminishes the splendour and dignity of the gospel, the surpassing excellency of which is inseparably combined with the true divinity of its living Head and Lord. From such considerations it follows, that we need not be scrupulous in ascribing to Christ the most exalted perfection of nature and character, or take any great pains to define with exactness what, in such portions of scripture as the present Psalm, is strictly and exclusively to be appropriated to the Father, and what to the Son, who is, " the brightness of the Father's glory," and in whom " dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

1 JEHOVAH is King : he is clothed with majesty :

Jehovah is clothed with the might with which he girded himself :

The world is established, it cannot be moved.

1. *The world.*—From what has been stated in the Introduction, we shall not be liable to any serious mistake, whether we apply this term to what

is called the world of nature, or to that spiritual kingdom, of which it is said, it " cannot be moved." Heb. xii. 18.

- 2 Thy throne is established from eternity :
Thou art from everlasting.
- 3 The floods lift up, O Jehovah ! the floods lift up their voice :
The floods lift up their waves.
- 4 Jehovah on high is mighty above the voices of many waters ;
Above the mighty billows of the sea.
- 5 Thy testimonies are exceedingly stedfast ;
Holiness becometh thy house, O Jehovah ! for ever.
-

PSALM XCIV.

THIS Psalm has no inscription, but the Greek version attributes it to David. Of the justness of this application no one will doubt, who compares it with several of what are undeniably the compositions of the royal Psalmist, and considers the sufferings which he endured from the relentless cruelty of Saul and his partisans. It consists of earnest supplications addressed to God in extreme distress, occasioned by the violence of his enemies. The Psalmist prays not for himself alone, but for the whole body of the people, who were suffering from the same causes with himself. He represents the authors of these calamities as so lost to all sentiments of justice and humanity, as to become the murderers of helpless widows, strangers, and orphans ; and so hardened, as to shelter themselves from the terrors of retribution, by questioning the omniscience and rectitude of the Governor of the world. He expostulates with them upon the egregious and palpable folly, as well as the flagrant impiety of their conduct ; and while he commends himself and his companions in suffering to the protection of the righteous Judge, he predicts the vengeance that would not fail to overtake his persecutors, as God would assuredly defend his people and vindicate the honour of his government. With these considerations the pious author mingles reflections on the real happiness of good men, though visited by salutary afflictions, and declares the special deliverance which he had himself experienced from some imminent danger to which his unrighteous foes had exposed him.

3. *The floods.*] — This magnificent image, which represents the entire subjection of the most turbulent elements to the power of God, is not less descriptive of the perfect control which he exercises over all the purposes and projects of men. " His counsel will stand, and he will do all his pleasure."

5. *Thy testimonies.*] — The testimonies of God, when taken generally, are the

truths which he has testified or declared, inclusive, not only of moral precepts, but of gracious and unchangeable promises. The combined result of which is to impress on the minds of men the weighty consideration, that those who trust in the mercy of God must not, in a lower degree, venerate and adore his sanctity in all their converse with him.

- 1 O JEHOVAH ! God of vengeance !
O God of vengeance ! shine forth.
- 2 Lift up thy hand, O thou Judge of the earth !
Render a recompense to the proud.
- 3 How long shall the wicked, O Jehovah ?
How long shall the wicked triumph ?
- 4 They utter and speak arrogancy ;
All the workers of iniquity boast themselves.
- 5 Thy people, O Jehovah ! they oppress ;
Thy inheritance they afflict.
- 6 They slay the widow and the stranger ;
They murder the orphans :
- 7 And they say, Jah seeth not ;
Nor doth the God of Jacob discern.
- 8 Understand, ye stupid among the people !
O ye fools ! when will ye be wise ?
- 9 He who planted the ear, can He not hear ?
He who formed the eye, can He not see ?
- 10 He who chastiseth the nations, who teacheth man to know,
Can He not correct ?
- 11 Jehovah knoweth the thoughts of men that they are vanity.
- 12 Blessed is the man whom thou, O Jah ! chastisest,
And instructest out of thy law ;
- 13 To grant him rest from days of evil,
Until a pit be digged for the wicked.
- 14 For Jehovah will not reject his people,
Nor forsake his inheritance :
- 15 For judgment will be directed by justice ;
And all the upright in heart will seek it.
- 16 Who will rise up for me against the doers of evil ?
Who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity ?

15. *For judgment, &c.*—The English Translation of this passage is perfectly literal, " Judgment shall return unto righteousness ;" but it conveys a very confused and indeterminate sense. The word for Judgment is, in Hebrew, of extensive signification : it here means, the

sentence or decision of a judge, which it declares will be pronounced, and carried into effect, according to the most perfect justice. For such a sentence the upright were anxiously waiting, and seeking, by their prayers, to have it speedily pronounced.

- 17 Unless Jehovah had been my help,
My soul would soon have dwelt in silence.
- 18 When I said, My foot is slipping,
Thy mercy, O Jehovah ! supported me.
- 19 In the multitude of my thoughts within me,
Thy consolations delight my soul.
- 20 Shall the throne of iniquity, which frameth mischief by a law,
Have fellowship with thee ?
- 21 They make an assault upon the life of the righteous ;
And innocent blood they condemn.
- 22 But Jehovah is my defence :
And my God is the rock of my refuge.
- 23 Therefore will he bring upon them their iniquity ;
And cut them off in their wickedness :
Jehovah our God will cut them off.

PSALM XCV.

THE Septuagint, and the apostle Paul, Heb. iv. 7, ascribe this Psalm to the pen of David. It consists of two parts ; in the first part, vv. 1—7, the pious Hebrews are represented as addressing their countrymen in general, and urging them to unite with sincerity and cheerfulness in celebrating the greatness and majesty of God. For this purpose, they briefly recount his stupendous works, and the right which he possesses over every creature, founded on his creative power, and binding unchangeable obligations upon men to worship him with profound reverence. The Israelites are further urged to the performance of this duty by considerations drawn from the extraordinary favours which God had bestowed on them, by taking them into covenant with himself and condescending to exercise a constant and tender superintendence over them as the sheep of his pasture. The second part begins with the last clause of ver. 7, and is continued to the end. In this, God himself is represented as urging the people to faith in his promises, and obedience to his laws, by a recital of the unbelief and disobedience of their ancestors, which brought upon them so many sorrows and miseries, and at length terminated in God's utter loathing

20. *Shall the throne, &c.*]—This is a manifest reference to Saul ; and the Psalmist puts the interrogation, as implying the greatest contradiction and

impossibility, that God should hold a partnership and association with men who were his greatest and avowed enemies.

of his people, so that he swore that none of that race should enjoy the fruitful land which he had promised to their fathers.

The apostle Paul, in Heb. iv., applies these events to the instruction and admonition of Christians, who are bound by obligations more stringent even than those of Israel, to adhere sacredly to their faith and to the obedience which is essentially connected with it, lest a severer punishment should fall on them than that under which the posterity of Abraham now lies prostrate.

- 1 COME ye, let us sing to Jehovah !
Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.
- 2 Let us approach his presence with thanksgiving ;
Let us make a joyful sound to him with psalms.
- 3 For Jehovah is a great God ;
And a great King, above all gods.
- 4 In his hand are the deep recesses of the earth ;
And his are the heights of the mountains.
- 5 The sea is his, for he made it ;
And his hands formed the dry land.
- 6 Come ye, let us worship and bow down ;
Let us kneel before Jehovah, our Maker.
- 7 For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture,
And the sheep of his hand. To-day, if ye will hear his voice,
- 8 Harden not your hearts, as at Meribah ;
As in the day of Massah, in the wilderness :
- 9 When your fathers tempted me,
Proved me, and saw my works.
- 10 Forty years was I disgusted with that generation ; and I said,
They are people of an erring heart, they know not my ways.
- 11 Of whom I swore in my wrath,
They shall not enter into the land of my rest.

7. *To-day.*]—This was the period when the psalm was written : the day was prolonged to the time of the promulgation of the gospel, and it is not yet terminated ; still it is called to-day. The night, however, is approaching, "What-

ever then thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might !"

8. *Meribah and Massah.*]—The origin and reason of these names, which are, in my opinion, better retained than translated, may be found in Exod. xvii. 7.

PSALM XCVI.

THIS Psalm is an extract from one much longer, which David composed for the solemnity of removing the ark from the house of Obbededom to Zion. The entire Psalm is extant in 1 Chron. xvi. 8—36. In the Greek version there is an inscription attached to this Psalm, to the following effect; "When the house was built after the captivity." It may hence be presumed that this portion of the original Psalm was extracted by the heads of the people, and, with a few inconsiderable alterations, adapted to the solemnity which took place on that occasion.

It can scarcely be doubted that, though the design of the original Psalm was to celebrate the majesty of God, and to commemorate his great mercies to the people of Israel, it has a further and more extensive reference. It enjoins the publication of the name and dominion of Jehovah among the nations of the earth; it tacitly, at least, intimates the destruction of idols among them, and predicts a reign more glorious and joyful than had before been witnessed; when Jehovah would, in a more illustrious manner, assume the seat of judgment, and exercise his righteous distributions over every part of the human race. These great events have hitherto been partially accomplished by the establishment of the kingdom of Christ, but will obtain their most perfect fulfilment when the divine Saviour shall come "in the glory of his Father, and of the holy angels." The sacred poem before us calls upon men universally to rejoice, but it limits not the work of praise to them; the heavens, the earth, and the sea, with all that is contained in them, are bidden to unite in one universal hymn. And what, may we not ask, what can communicate joy and transport, if the glorious and surpassing consummation which is thus brought before us does not awaken emotions of delight and gratitude inexpressible in every bosom? For, when this Psalm shall be verified, the desires of good men in all ages, and the universal prayer of the church, "Thy kingdom come," which has ascended from every tongue of piety and benevolence, will receive their full completion.

1 SING ye to Jehovah a new song!

Sing unto Jehovah, all the earth!

2 Sing unto Jehovah, bless his name;

Publish his salvation from day to day.

1. *A new song.*]—This verse is not found in the original psalm, which is contained in the book of Chronicles, but appears to have been added for the new purpose to which this shorter psalm was appropriated. By a new song is intended a song of excellence chiefly; but this is not the entire meaning here. The song

was, strictly speaking, an old one, but adapted to a new purpose, to celebrate new favours bestowed upon Israel; and to give indications of the new dispensation of the kingdom of the Messiah, which was advancing, and most probably was more generally expected than at the time when David composed the original psalm.

- 3 Declare ye among the nations his glory ;
Among all the peoples, his wonders.
- 4 For Jehovah is great, and greatly to be praised :
Venerable is he above all gods.
- 5 For all the gods of the nations are idols ;
But Jehovah made the heavens.
- 6 Glory and majesty are in his presence ;
Strength and beauty in his sanctuary.
- 7 Ascribe unto Jehovah, ye families of the peoples,
Ascribe unto Jehovah glory and might !
- 8 Ascribe unto Jehovah the honour that is due to his name :
Bring an oblation, and come into his courts.
- 9 Worship Jehovah in the glorious sanctuary :
Fear before him, all the earth.
- 10 Say ye among the nations, Jehovah reigneth :
The world is established, that it cannot be moved :
He will judge the peoples with righteousness.
- 11 Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad ;
Let the sea roar, and the fulness of it.
- 12 Let the field be joyful, and all that is in it :
Then all the trees of the forest will rejoice ; [earth :
- 13 Before Jehovah, for he is coming, for he is coming to judge the
He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with
his truth.

PSALM XCVII.

THE tenor of this Psalm very much resembles that of the ninety-sixth ; and, it is not improbable, was composed for the same occasion. The scenery by which the poem is embellished is drawn from the appearance of Jehovah upon Mount Sinai, which is a frequent source of allusion in the sacred writings, and adapted, by its magnificence, to produce reverence and awe towards the majestic Being who, on earth, dwells amid the thick darkness, while in his own nature he is a light so pure, that in him " there is no darkness at all." After the description of the God of Israel, the sacred poet proceeds to express the stupidity and impiety of idol worship, and utters an invective against idolaters, whose disgrace and confusion he predicts, and for which he offers his fervent

supplications. We shall justly regard this, like the last Psalm, as intended to be significant of the reign of the Messiah, in whose days it is expressly asserted "the idols shall be utterly abolished."

- 1 JEHOVAH reigneth: let the earth rejoice;
Let the numerous regions be glad.
- 2 Clouds and darkness are round about him;
Righteousness and equity are the foundation of his throne.
- 3 Fire goeth before him,
And consumeth his adversaries around.
- 4 His lightnings illuminate the world;
The earth seeth, and trembleth.
- 5 The hills melt like wax at the presence of Jehovah,
At the presence of the Lord of all the earth.
- 6 The heavens declare his righteousness;
And all the peoples behold his glory.
- 7 Let all the worshippers of carved images be confounded,
Who exult in idols. Worship him, all ye gods!
- 8 Zion heareth, and is glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoice,
On account of thy judgments, O Jehovah!
- 9 For thou, O Jehovah! art the High God, over all the earth:
Exceedingly art thou exalted, above all gods. [saints;
- 10 Ye who love Jehovah, hate evil; he preserveth the lives of his
He delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.
- 11 Light is diffused for the righteous,
And gladness for the upright in heart.

1. *Numerous regions.*—Not only the land of Israel, but all the inhabited countries of the world.

2—4. —*Vide* Exod. xix. 18, and the frequent allusions made to that awful display of God's glory.

6. *The heavens declare.*—This may be interpreted so as to include the material heavens and their inhabitants equally, as publishing, in their respective modes, the physical and moral perfection of the Deity.

7. *Worship him, all ye gods.*—They are here called gods, whom the Gentile nations regarded as such,—departed

princes, heroes, idols, &c.; which, in their final overthrow, will demonstrate their own insignificance, and the abject folly of their worshippers, and thus exhibit the supremacy of the only living God.

8. *Zion heareth.*—Heareth the annunciation that Jehovah reigneth. By "the daughters of Judah," understand the towns and villages of the land.

11. *Light is diffused.*—The version, "Light is sown," presents an incongruous combination of figures; for who can say what is meant by the sowing of light? The diffusion or expansion of

12 Rejoice in Jehovah, O ye righteous !

And give thanks, when ye remember his holiness.

PSALM XCVIII.

THIS Psalm unquestionably relates to the same subjects as the preceding two : —the universal dominion and the righteous government of God ; the adoration and praises that are due to him from every creature ; and the triumphant joy which his advent, in the person of the divine Messiah, inspires into the bosoms of “ all those who love his appearing.”

A PSALM.

- 1 SING ye to Jehovah a new song, for he doeth wondrous things :
His right hand and his holy arm effect his salvation.
- 2 Jehovah maketh known his salvation :
His righteousness he discloseth in the sight of the nations.
- 3 He remembereth his mercy and his truth to the house of Israel :
All the ends of the earth behold the salvation of our God.
- 4 Make a joyful sound unto Jehovah, all the earth !
Make a loud sound, and rejoice and sing praise.
- 5 Sing ye to Jehovah with the harp ;
With the harp, and with the voice of a psalm :
- 6 With trumpets, and the sound of cornet,
Make a joyful sound before Jehovah, the King.
- 7 Let the sea roar, and the fulness of it ;
The world, and they who inhabit it.
- 8 Let the floods clap their hands :
Let the hills be joyful in concert,
- 9 Before Jehovah ; for he cometh to judge the earth :
With righteousness he will judge the world ;
And the peoples with equity.

light is intelligible, and means that,
though good men may be in darkness or

adversity, light and prosperity will burst
through the cloud.

PSALM XCIX.

THIS, like the preceding three Psalms, was, we may conclude from its contents, specially designed for the solemnities which attended on the opening of the second temple, subsequently to the return from captivity. After announcing the universal reign, and celebrating the goodness of God to his people, it sets before them the examples of the most illustrious of their ancestors, who abounded in the exercise of devotion, and were favoured with signal marks of divine audience and attentive regard.

- 1 JEHOVAH reigneth ; let the peoples be in awe !
He sitteth above the cherubim ; let the earth be moved !
- 2 Jehovah is great in Zion :
He is high above the peoples.
- 3 Let them praise thy great and venerable name ;
For it is holy.
- 4 *Let them praise* the might of the King, who loveth equity.
Thou hast established justice ;
Judgment and righteousness thou exercisest in Jacob.
- 5 Exalt ye Jehovah, our God ! and worship at his footstool :
For he is holy.
- 6 Moses and Aaron were among his ministers ;
Samuel among those who invoked his name :
They called upon Jehovah, and he answered them.
- 7 In the pillar of cloud he spake unto them :
They kept his testimonies, the appointments which he gave to them.
- 8 Thou, O Jehovah, our God ! didst answer them ;
Thou wast God, who didst forgive them ;
Though thou didst take vengeance upon their iniquities.
- 9 Exalt ye Jehovah, our God ! and worship at his holy mountain :
For Jehovah, our God, is holy.

3. *For it is holy.*—This, and the final clauses of vv. 5 and 9, were probably responses, which were sung by the chorus.

4. *Let them praise the might of the*

King.] — The best interpreters are of opinion, that this supplement, which is necessary to complete the sense, should be taken from the preceding verse.

PSALM C.

THE inscription which is prefixed to this Psalm, taken together with the testimony of the Chaldee paraphrase, renders it likely that it was especially appropriated to the offering of sacrifices of thanksgiving, respecting which instructions are delivered in Levit. xvii. 12. The tenor of the Psalm is quite in agreement with such an appropriation. The most important reasons for gratitude are briefly enumerated in it; such as God's power, manifested in the creation of man, and the consequent right which he has in them; the gracious covenants which he has established with them, whereby he pledges himself to become their Shepherd, and to regard them as the sheep of his pasture: and the enumeration is completed by a statement of God's essential goodness, and the perpetuity of his mercy through all ages. It is, therefore, worthy of constant remembrance, that praise is a duty no less imperative than prayer; it is delightful in its exercise, and most pleasing to God when it arises from due conceptions of his unchangeable goodness, and is accompanied by a truly devout, grateful, and holy temper.

A PSALM OF PRAISE.

- 1 MAKE a joyful sound unto Jehovah,
All the earth !
- 2 Serve Jehovah with gladness !
Come into his presence with singing.
- 3 Acknowledge that Jehovah is God ! He made us, and we are his ;
His people, and the sheep of his pasture.
- 4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving, his courts with praise :
Give thanks to him, bless his name ;
- 5 For Jehovah is good ; his mercy everlasting ;
His truth to all ages.

PSALM CI.

THE contents of this Psalm show that it was written at some remarkable period of David's life. Three different times have been fixed upon as respectively giving occasion for the solemn resolutions which are announced in it. The first is supposed to be when David, immediately after the death of Saul, succeeded to the government of a part of the kingdom; the second, when the

whole kingdom was united under the dominion of David; and the third, when he removed the ark from the house of Obbedom to Zion, and placed it in the vicinity of his own abode. It is certainly of little importance which of these periods we select, but the second verse of the Psalm has some appearance of relating to the last mentioned. The Psalmist here says, "When thou shalt come to me," which seems to intimate, that when he was to have the symbols of God's presence so near to him, he experienced a solemn sentiment respecting the holiness that was now more than ever incumbent upon him—a sentiment which induced him to form the sacred purposes and resolutions which he has specified. These purposes relate to the character of the persons whom he would select for his household, and those whom he would employ in carrying on his government, which appeared to be more firmly established by the divine condescension that was manifested to him, in having the earthly residence of God placed so near to himself. It was quite in agreement with David's character to form purposes of more fervent and steadfast obedience, in proportion to the advantages and favours which the divine goodness bestowed upon him.

A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 I WILL sing of mercy and of justice :
Unto thee, O Jchovah ! will I sing.
- 2 I will exercise prudence in a perfect course : [upright heart.
When thou shalt come to me, I will walk in my house with an
- 3 I will set nothing that is vile before my eyes :
I hate the doing of wickedness, it shall not adhere to me.
- 4 The heart that is perverse shall depart from me :
I will show no favour to a wicked person.
- 5 A calumniator of his neighbour in secret, I will cut off :
A man whose eyes are lofty, and his heart proud, I cannot endure.
- 6 My eyes shall regard the faithful of the land, that they may dwell
with me :
He who walketh in the way of rectitude shall serve me.
- 7 A deceitful man shall not abide in my house :
He that uttereth falsehood shall not stand in my sight.
- 8 Early will I cut off the wicked of the land ; [Jehovah.
That I may destroy all the workers of iniquity out of the city of

1. *Of mercy and of justice.*—He thus proposes the design of the hymn he was about to compose. The mercy and justice of which he speaks, relate to the manner in which it was his firm intention to conduct his government; a wise and skilful combi-

nation of these qualities is the essential character of good and patriotic government.

8. *Early.*—This literally means "in the morning," as the morning was the fitting time for the execution of public justice. Jerem. xxi. 12.

PSALM CII.

THIS plaintive poem was written by some pious exile towards the expiration of the seventy years of captivity, during which the people of Israel were detained in Babylon. The holy land was now lying desolate and uncultivated; its towns and cities were demolished; Jerusalem was a heap of ruins; and the magnificent temple, which had so long been honoured with the presence of the Most High, was overthrown and consumed by the flames in which its enraged and victorious captors had involved it. How keenly this state of public and individual degradation was felt, there are many expressive proofs in the Scriptures; and this Psalm delineates the feeling by most affecting images and mournful exclamations. In the midst, however, of this intense and accumulated grief, the devout author seeks to draw for himself and his distressed compatriots some consolation from the unchangeable existence, the universal providence, and the faithful promises of God. He depicts with deep sensibility the ardent affection which still glowed in the bosoms of these outcasts from their native soil, and the fondness with which they cherished the hope that they should yet be restored to it; that the walls of their beloved and long lost Zion should be rebuilt, and the praises of Jehovah yet again resound through the courts of his temple, and among the exulting multitudes of his worshippers.

But though these pious exiles did not altogether lose their hold upon the promises and covenant of God, the language of the Psalm shows that their spirits were broken by the long years of their desolate condition, and their hearts depressed by the sorrows to which they were subjected in a strange land, dwelling amidst proud and insulting masters, and daily witnessing scenes of idolatry and impiety which pierced their bosoms with poignant grief. The author of the Psalm had, most probably, been carried away captive in early youth; he had survived nearly to the end of the term, and now, worn with cares and anxieties, he was earnest with God that deliverance might speedily arrive, lest he should sink into the grave without revisiting the delightful scenes by which his imagination was enraptured, without witnessing the fulfilment of the hopes which the prophets of God had excited by the predictions which they had delivered relative to the returning prosperity of his beloved country. He at length takes refuge in the eternity of God, and the everlasting continuance of his kingdom; and, glancing at the bright display that was yet to come of the blessings of the reign of the Messiah, when the nations and kingdoms of the world should be numbered among his disciples and worshippers, he concludes by asserting the final triumph and ever-during glory of that brightest illustration of the wisdom, power, and benevolence of the Most High.

A PRAYER OF THE AFFLICTED, WHEN HE IS OVERWHELMED, AND POURETH FORTH
HIS COMPLAINT BEFORE JEHOVAH.

I O JEHOVAH ! hearken to my prayer ;
And let my cry come unto thee.

- 2 Hide not thy face from me in the day of my trouble :
 Incline thy ear to me :
 Make haste to answer me when I call.
- 3 For my days are vanishing like smoke ;
 And my bones are burned as a brand.
- 4 My heart is stricken, and withereth like grass ;
 For I forget to eat my food.
- 5 Through the voice of my groans
 My bones cleave unto my skin.
- 6 I am like the pelican of the wilderness ;
 I resemble an owl of the desert.
- 7 I am sleepless : I am like a solitary bird,
 Upon the house-top.
- 8 All the day my enemies reproach me ;
 They madly insult me : they swear by me.
- 9 Truly I eat ashes like bread ;
 I mingle my tears with what I drink ;
- 10 On account of thy indignation and thy wrath ;
 For thou liftest me up, and castest me down.
- 11 My days resemble the shadow that declineth ;
 And I am withered like grass.
- 12 But thou, O Jehovah ! wilt endure for ever :
 And the remembrance of thee to all ages.
- 13 Arise, thou ! have compassion upon Zion ;
 For the time to favour her, for the appointed time is at hand.
- 14 Surely thy servants delight in her stones ;
 And her dust they affectionately love.

4. *My heart is stricken.*]—The mention of grass immediately directs us to interpret "the striking," as resembling the effect of the vehement heat of the sun upon the verdant grass, which is withered and burnt up by it.

6. *The pelican and owl.*]—These birds delight in desert places and ruined buildings ; where, in undisturbed solitude, they utter their melancholy howlings and cries.

7. *A solitary bird.*]—An owl is most likely the bird intended.

8. *They swear by me.*]—The meaning of this passage is, My enemies use my name as a form of execration, as if they should say, "Let our fate be that of these miserable Jews, if we speak what is false."

9. *I eat ashes.*]—Ashes are a symbol of grief ; the sense therefore is, grief is my food.

10. *Thou liftest me up.*]—i. e. As if by a storm or whirlwind, which forcibly takes me from the ground, and dashes me down again.

- 15 Then will the nations fear the name of Jehovah:
And all the kings of the earth thy glory.
- 16 When Jehovah shall build up Zion,
He will be seen in his glory.
- 17 He will regard the prayer of the desolate;
He will not despise their supplication.
- 18 This is written for the coming generation;
And the people to be created shall praise Jehovah.
- 19 For he looketh down from the height of his sanctuary,
From heaven, Jehovah beholdeth the earth;
- 20 To listen to the groaning of the prisoner;
To release the children of death:
- 21 That the name of Jehovah may be declared in Zion,
And his praise in Jerusalem;
- 22 When the peoples shall be gathered together,
And the kingdoms, to serve Jehovah.
- 23 He weakeneth my strength in the way:
He shorteneth my days.
- 24 I say, O my God! take me not away in the midst of my days:
Thy years are throughout all ages.
- 25 Of old thou hast founded the earth,
And the heavens are the work of thy hands:

18. *This is written.*—*scil.* For the instruction of future ages.

20. *Children of death.*—Men destined to be put to death.

23. *In the way.*—i. e. In the course and progress of life.

25. *Of old, &c.*—The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, verses 10—12, cites this passage, in proof of the superiority of Christ above angels and men. If the citation is truly applicable to him, the case is decided, and the passage offers to us an illustrious proof of the proper deity of our blessed Saviour, such as no criticism can evade or invalidate. The propriety of the application must be resolved, in part, by what the Apostle knew to be the current interpretation among his countrymen, as it is very unlikely he would, in such a case, put a

sense upon the words of the psalm which the Jews of his time would repudiate. But we have a more powerful reason for looking on this application as correct, derived from the inspiration of the Apostle; and it is strange that persons who believe in the divine authority of the gospel, should allow themselves to discredit the infallible authority of an Apostle to interpret the Old Testament, to which infallibility he himself frequently asserts a claim. His claim is either true or false; if the latter, the New Testament ceases to be a guide, such as any man who chooses not to be deceived, will permit himself to follow. It may be said, if this application of the words of the psalm be accurate, then Christ must be Jehovah; and, if so, what is to be thought of the Deity of the Father? The reply

- 26 They shall perish, but thou wilt endure :
Even all of them will become old like a garment ;
As a vesture wilt thou change them, and they will be changed ;
- 27 But thou art the same,
And thy years have no end.
- 28 The children of thy servants will continue ;
Even their seed will be established before thee.
-

PSALM CIII.

THE beautiful and affecting Psalm which we have now to contemplate, was, as it appears, written by David. Interpreters hold different opinions respecting the time and occasion which led to its composition. They justly observe, that it is adapted to all times and places ; and many of them think it was occasioned by the deep sentiments of humility and gratitude which David felt, after the assurances which he received that his great sin, in the case of Bathsheba and Uriah, was forgiven. I am not prepared to say that this judgment is certainly correct ; but as it is a subject of no great moment, am willing to acquiesce in it. If it be correct, then we have two of the most instructive examples of enlightened and fervent piety which are contained in the Holy Scriptures, occasioned by one failure in the conduct of a good man, who was habitually remarkable for his steadfast obedience to the laws of God. The one of these examples is in Psalm li., in which the sacred writer records his deep and humble penitence : and the other, which is now before us, which displays the feelings

which it appears to me to be proper to make is, that unquestionably our Redeemer is represented as Jehovah ; and that it is no part of our business or duty to define the nature of God, so as to say wherein the precise distinction between the Father and the Son consists. That in some respects they are alike and one, and in others different, is a matter clearly revealed ; but how this similarity and dissimilarity are reconcilable, is not only not revealed, but there is not in the Scriptures the smallest approximation towards an explanation of it. The greatest injury that has been inflicted upon the christian doctrine on this subject, has accrued, not from the efforts of its

opposers to disprove it, but from the endeavours of its friends to explain it.

The only legitimate discussion on this theme respects the true sense of the statements of fact which the Scriptures make in relation to it. If it can be shown, as I believe it can, and has been with irrefragable force of argument, that the proper deity of the Father and of the Son equally is attested by the sacred writers, and that the unity or oneness of God is equally maintained by them, then the inevitable result is, either that we must take the statement on the authority of the Bible, or we must abandon it as a guide in which we can place no implicit reliance.

of sacred joy and thankfulness, in terms that are most delightful and consolatory. So admirably adapted are these two Psalms to the varied sentiments and emotions of christian feeling, that I can scarcely suppose any real believer of the gospel is to be found, who has not, on multiplied occasions, made them the objects of his attentive meditation, so as to have, if not the express words, yet the sense of them, engraven on his heart and memory, in characters never to be effaced but by death. May the writer of these remarks be permitted to say, that his attempts to communicate some additional clearness, and some increase of impression to these divine odes, will reap an invaluable reward if they shall accomplish so desirable an object, even in a small degree.

The Psalmist introduces his composition with an impressive injunction addressed specially to himself, to acknowledge, with unfailing thankfulness, the multiplied acts of divine goodness and compassion with which he had been favoured, more expressly by the forgiveness of his iniquity, and the removal of his diseases. He then proceeds to notice the extent and perpetuity of divine goodness to the house of Israel; he delivers a most impressive and affecting representation of the condescension and paternal mercy of God to his servants, who find durable consolation in him amidst the shortness and uncertainty of life; and concludes by a lofty celebration of the ever-during benignity of the Most High, and a solemn invocation to the whole intelligent universe to glorify the dominion of its supreme Creator and Governor.

A PSALM OF DAVID.

1 BLESS Jehovah, O my soul !

And all that is within me, *bless* his holy name.

2 Bless Jehovah, O my soul !

And forget not any of his benefits.

3 Who forgiveth all thy iniquity ;

Who healeth all thy diseases ;

4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction ;

Who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies :

5 Who satisfieth thy advancing age with good ;

Thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

6 Jehovah executeth righteousness and equity

For all the oppressed.

1. *All that is within me, viz.*]—The understanding, heart, affections, and energies.

5. *Thy advancing age.*]—Eng. T.—'Thy mouth.' The version here adopted is that of the Chal. and is supported by the parallelism in the following clause.

— *Like the eagle's.*]—The only renewing of the eagle's youth is similar to that of other birds, which exchange their old plumage for new; a change which gives an appearance of greater vigour, beauty, and youth.

- 7 He made known his ways unto Moses ;
His acts to the children of Israel.
- 8 Jehovah is merciful and gracious,
Slow to anger and plenteous in loving-kindness.
- 9 He will not always chide,
Neither will he retain *his anger* for ever.
- 10 He dealeth not with us according to our sins,
Nor rewardeth us in proportion to our iniquities :
- 11 For in proportion to the height of the heavens above the earth,
Is the greatness of his mercy towards them that fear him.
- 12 As far as the east is from the west,
So far he removeth our transgressions from us.
- 13 As a father pitieth his children,
Jehovah pitieth them that fear him :
- 14 For he knoweth our frame ;
He remembereth that we are dust.
- 15 As for man, his days are like grass ;
As a flower of the field, so he flourisheth ;
- 16 For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone ;
And its place will acknowledge it no more.
- 17 But the mercy of Jehovah is from everlasting to everlasting,
Upon them that fear him ;
And his faithfulness upon children's children,
- 18 Upon those who observe his covenant,
And upon them who remember his commandments to do them.
- 19 Jehovah hath established his throne in the heavens ;
And his kingdom ruleth over all.
- 20 Bless ye Jehovah, his angels, who are mighty in strength ;
Who perform his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his
word.
- 21 Bless ye Jehovah, his hosts :
Ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.
- 22 Bless ye Jehovah, all his works, in all places of his dominion :
Bless Jehovah, O my soul !

PSALM CIV.

WE cannot determine with any certainty who was the writer of this Psalm, or at what time it was written. The Septuagint, indeed, ascribes it to David ; but there is some reason for hesitating to admit this testimony. Several of the Psalms were composed subsequently to the return from the captivity in Babylon ; and the general character of this is so much in agreement with them, as to make it probable that it belongs to the same period.

It constitutes a noble song of praise, and derives its topics chiefly from the divine power in creation, which constructed the frame of Nature, and established the heavens, the earth, and the seas, with all their innumerable inhabitants and productions. The absolute control which is exercised over the universe by the wisdom and authority of God is asserted ; and the glory which accrues to him—the glory of his power, wisdom, and goodness, is ascribed to him. The devout Psalmist concludes his meditation by expressing his fixed purpose to celebrate the praises of God through his whole existence, and by a solemn warning to wicked men that they will finally and universally perish.

- 1 BLESS Jehovah, O my soul ! O, Jehovah, my God !
Thou art very great : thou art clothed with honour and majesty.
- 2 He putteth on light as a garment :
He stretcheth out the heavens like a canopy.
- 3 He frameth the floors of his chambers in the waters : [wind.
He maketh the clouds his chariot : he flyeth on the wings of the
- 4 He maketh the winds his messengers ;
Flaming fire, his ministers.
- 5 He founded the earth upon its bases,
That it might not be moved for ever.

3. *Of his chambers.*—The higher regions of the atmosphere, where clouds are formed, and where storms proceed, are represented as the upper apartments of the palace which God has built, and which he inhabits.

4. *Winds his messengers.*—The English Translation has “ He maketh his angels spirits.” The Hebrew word for angels and spirits are both ambiguous ; the one meaning, both angels and messengers ; the other, both winds and spirits. There is no reason to think that angels are here meant, because the writer is speaking of

the material agents which God employs to accomplish his will.

5. *On its bases.*—It is not implied in this expression that the Psalmist supposed the earth to be built on some foundation, as he speaks the language of poetry, not of philosophy. The account of the creation, and continued preservation of the earth, &c., is carried on to ver. 30. Some writers have thought there is in it a reference to the general deluge ; but I see no reason for such a supposition.

- 6 Thou didst cover it with the deep, as with a garment :
The waters stood above the mountains :
- 7 At thy rebuke they fled,
At the voice of thy thunder they hastened away :
- 8 The mountains ascended, the valleys settled,
In the place which thou providedst for them :
- 9 Thou didst fix a boundary, over which they pass not,
So as to return and cover the earth.
- 10 He sent the springs among the valleys ;
They flow between the mountains :
- 11 They yield water to all the beasts of the field :
The wild asses slake their thirst.
- 12 Among them the fowls of the air have their dwelling :
Among the branches of the trees they utter their voice.
- 13 He watereth the mountains from his chambers ;
The earth is filled with the fruits of thy works.
- 14 He causeth grass to grow for cattle, and herb for the use of man ;
To produce food from out of the earth :
- 15 Wine also, which gladdeneth the heart of man ;
Oil to make his face glisten ; and bread which sustaineth man's heart.
- 16 The trees of Jehovah are filled with moisture ;
The cedars of Lebanon which he planted.
- 17 There the birds build their nests ;
The fir-trees are an abode for the stork.
- 18 The high mountains are a retreat for the goats ;
The rocks for wild mice.
- 19 He appointed the moon for seasons :
The sun knoweth his going down.
- 20 Thou makest darkness, and it is night :
Then come forth all the beasts of the forest.
- 21 The young lions roar for prey,
To ask their food from God.

6. *With the deep.*] — This is in agreement with the statement made in Gen. i. 2, 9. When the waters of the chaos were drawn off and collected

into one receptacle, the mountains and inequalities on the surface of the earth became visible, which they were not before.

- 22 The sun ariseth ; they withdraw,
And repose in their dens.
- 23 Man goeth forth to his labour,
And to his employment, until the evening.
- 24 O Jehovah ! how numerous are thy works !
In wisdom thou hast made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.
- 25 Vast is the sea, and wide in extent : [small.
There animals without number move, both the great and the
- 26 There go the ships ; the leviathan,
Which thou didst form to sport in it.
- 27 All these wait upon thee,
To give them their food in its season :
- 28 Thou givest it to them ; they gather it :
Thou openest thy hand ; they are satisfied with good :
- 29 Thou hidest thy face ; they are disquieted :
Thou gatherest their breath ; they expire, and return to their dust.
- 30 Thou sendest forth thy breath ; they are created :
And thou renewest the face of the earth.
- 31 The glory of Jehovah is everlasting :
Jehovah rejoiceth in his works.
- 32 He looketh upon the earth, it trembleth :
He toucheth the mountains, and they smoke.
- 33 I will sing unto Jehovah while I live ;
I will sing praises to my God, as long as I have my being.
- 34 My meditation on him shall be pleasant :
I will rejoice in Jehovah.
- 35 Sinners will perish from the earth ; and the wicked will be no more.
Bless Jehovah, O my soul ! Praise ye Jehovah !

PSALM CV.

THE form in which this Psalm is drawn up, (a considerable part of it being taken from one that had been composed in the time of David, *vide* 1 Chron.

32. *It trembleth.*] — There seems to be a reference in this verse to the descent upon mount Sinai ; or it may refer merely to the effects which are produced by great storms, thunders, lightnings, &c.

xvi. 8—36,) and its resemblance to other Psalms which were written for the services of the second temple, lead us to suppose that it was composed for this purpose. It consists of a song of praise, in which the people are called upon to recollect the signal and extraordinary favours which God had bestowed on their ancestors, that they might offer to him the thanks to which he was so justly entitled, and might be excited to venerate his covenant and live in obedience to his commandments.

- 1 GIVE ye thanks to Jchovah ! invoke his name !
Make known among the peoples his deeds.
- 2 Sing ye unto him : sing psalms unto him :
Speak ye of all his wonders.
- 3 Exult ye in his holy name :
Let the heart of them who seek Jchovah rejoice.
- 4 Seek ye Jchovah, and his strength :
Seek his face for evermore.
- 5 Remember the miracles which he performed ;
His wonders, and the orders of his mouth :
- 6 Ye seed of Abraham, his servant ;
Ye children of Jacob, his chosen.
- 7 He is Jchovah our God :
His dominion is over all the earth.
- 8 He remembereth his covenant for ever :
The word which he commanded to a thousand generations.
- 9 *The covenant* which he made with Abraham,
And his oath unto Isaac ;
- 10 Which he confirmed unto Jacob, for a law :
To Israel, an everlasting covenant ; saying,
- 11 Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan,
The portion of your inheritance.
- 12 When they were few in number,
Inconsiderable, and strangers in it ;
- 13 When they went from nation to nation ;
From one kingdom to another people ;
- 14 He suffered no man to oppress them ;
He rebuked kings for their sake :
- 15 “ Touch not my anointed ;
“ Injure not my prophets.”

- 16 He also called for famine upon the land ;
He cut off the whole supply of bread.
- 17 He sent a man before them ;
Joseph, who was sold for a slave.
- 18 With fetters they afflicted his feet ;
They bound him with iron ;
- 19 Until the time arrived which was appointed,
The word of Jehovah tried him.
- 20 The King sent, and liberated him ;
The Ruler of the people set him free.
- 21 He made him Lord over his house,
And Ruler over all his possessions :
- 22 That he might bind his princes at his will,
And teach his senators wisdom.
- 23 So Israel came into Egypt ;
And Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.
- 24 Then he made his people exceedingly fruitful ;
He rendered them stronger than their enemies.
- 25 He inclined their heart to hate his people,
And to act deceitfully towards his servants.
- 26 He sent Moses his servant,
Aaron whom he had chosen.
- 27 They performed his miracles among them,
And prodigies, in the land of Ham.
- 28 He sent darkness, and darkened *the land* ;
Yet they rebelled against his word.
- 29 He turned their waters into blood,
And killed their fish.
- 30 Their land brought forth frogs abundantly,
In the chambers of their kings.
- 31 He commanded, and the fly came ;
And gnats in all their border.

19. *The word of Jehovah tried him.*] — The meaning of this expression, which is not quite obvious, seems to be, that the order or arrangement of

God in relation to Joseph was, that he should be confined so long as to make his patience and submission evident.

- 32 He made their rain to become hail :
He sent flames of fire upon their land.
- 33 He smote both their vines and their fig-trees ;
And he destroyed the trees throughout their border
- 34 He gave command, and the locusts came ;
And caterpillars also without number :
- 35 They devoured all the herbage of the land,
And consumed the fruits of their ground.
- 36 Then he smote all the first-born in their country,
The beginning of all their strength.
- 37 He brought them forth also with silver and gold :
Nor was there a feeble person among their tribes.
- 38 Egypt rejoiced at their departure ;
For their terror had fallen upon them.
- 39 He spread a cloud for a covering,
And fire to give light during the night.
- 40 They asked, and he brought quails ;
And with bread of heaven he filled them.
- 41 He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out ;
They flowed in the desert like a river.
- 42 For he remembered his holy promise,
With Abraham his servant.
- 43 So he brought forth his people with joy,
His chosen people with singing.
- 44 Then he gave them the countries of the nations ;
And they possessed the labours of the peoples :
- 45 In order that they might observe his statutes,
And keep his laws. Praise ye Jehovah !

PSALM CVI.

THIS Psalm presents an affecting recital of the crimes and miseries of the people of Israel, to which they subjected themselves by their disregard of the authority of God, and their ungrateful returns for all his multiplied mercies.

††, *The labours, &c.*—*scil.* The products of their labour ; their buildings, cultivated lands, &c.

It was written about the same time, and for the same purposes as the hundred and fifth, and must have been productive of very powerful emotions in the bosoms of the people, who had lately returned from captivity. They had constantly before them the altered state of their country, its scanty population, its dilapidated cities, its uncultivated fields, and the numberless marks of desolation which a victorious and cruel enemy had inflicted; all of which were augmented by the absence of its inhabitants for seventy years. How different from the prosperity, fruitfulness, and happiness which had formerly beautified and gladdened the whole! So evil and bitter a thing did they find it to rebel against the living God, and to abandon his service and worship!

1 PRAISE ye Jehovah ! give thanks unto Jehovah !

For he is good : for his mercy is everlasting.

2 Who can declare the mighty acts of Jehovah ?

Or show forth all his praise ?

3 Blessed are they who observe justice ;

And he that, at all times, worketh righteousness.

4 Remember me, O Jehovah ! with the favour of thy people :

Visit me with thy salvation :

5 That I may behold the felicity of thy chosen ;

That I may rejoice with the gladness of thy nation,

And may exult with thy inheritance.

6 We have sinned with our fathers :

We have done impiously and wickedly.

7 Our fathers understood not thy miracles in Egypt :

They remembered not the multitude of thy mercies ;

But provoked thee at the sea, at the Red Sea.

8 Yet he saved them for his name's sake ;

That he might make his mighty power known.

9 He rebuked the Red Sea, and it became dry :

Then he led them through the deeps, as in the wilderness.

10 He saved them from the hand of him that hated them ;

And he redeemed them from the power of the adversary.

11 Then the waters covered their enemies :

Not one of them was left.

12 So they believed his words :

They sang his praise.

13 They soon forgot his works ;

They waited not for his counsel ;

- 14 But were influenced by immoderate desire, in the wilderness ;
And tempted God in the desert.
- 15 Then he granted their request :
But he sent a consuming plague among them.
- 16 They were envious against Moses also in the camp ;
And against Aaron, who was consecrated to Jehovah.
- 17 The earth opened, and swallowed up Dathan,
And overwhelmed the company of Abiram.
- 18 Then a fire was kindled among their associates ;
The flame consumed the wicked.
- 19 They made a calf in Horeb,
And worshipped a molten image.
- 20 Thus they changed their glory
Into the similitude of a beeve, that eateth grass.
- 21 They forgot God who saved them ;
Who had done great works in Egypt ;
- 22 Wonderful works in the land of Ham,
Terrible deeds at the Red Sea.
- 23 He therefore said, he would destroy them ;
Had not Moses, his chosen, stood in the breach before him,
To turn away his anger, that he might not destroy them.
- 24 They, moreover, despised the desirable land :
They believed not his word ;
- 25 But murmured in their tents :
They hearkened not to the voice of Jehovah.
- 26 He therefore lifted up his hand, and sware,
That they should fall in the wilderness :
- 27 That he would overthrow their offspring among the nations,
And scatter them among the countries.
- 28 They addicted themselves to Baal Peor ;
And did eat the sacrifices of dead idols.
- 29 Thus they provoked him to anger with their crimes ;
So that a plague burst forth among them.

15. *Vide* Additional Note.

28. *Baal Peor.*]—The name of a Moabish idol, whose rites were celebrated with most impious and obscene practices.

— *Dead idols.*]—The representations of deceased princes, heroes, &c. to whom they offered sacrifices, on which they then feasted.

- 30 Then Phinchas arose, and executed justice :
 So the plague was restrained.
- 31 And it was accounted to him for righteousness,
 To all ages, for ever.
- 32 They also provoked him at the waters of Meribah :
 And evil came upon Moses for their sake :
- 33 Because they irritated his spirit,
 So that he spake inconsiderately with his lips.
- 34 They destroyed not the nations,
 As Jehovah had commanded them :
- 35 But they mingled themselves with the nations,
 And learned their works :
- 36 So that they served their idols,
 Which became a snare to them :
- 37 For they sacrificed their sons
 And their daughters to dæmons :
- 38 They shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons
 And of their daughters, whom they offered to the idols of Canaan ;
 So that the land was polluted with blood.
- 39 Thus were they defiled by their works :
 They practised whoredom with the idols which they made.
- 40 Therefore, the anger of Jehovah was inflamed against his people,
 So that he abhorred his inheritance.
- 41 Then he gave them into the hand of the nations :
 And they who hated them became their rulers.
- 42 Their adversaries also oppressed them ;
 And they were subjugated by their power.
- 43 Many times did he rescue them ;
 But they rebelled with their determinations,
 And were diminished by their iniquity.

37. *To dæmons.*]—Deified great men, worshipped as gods by the gentile nations.

39. *They practised whoredom.*]—This figurative language is often used to represent the illicit worship of idols. God had entered into a marriage covenant with his people, and regarded such worship as a breach of it.

— *Which they made.*] — They first fabricated their gods, and then adored them.

43. *With their determinations.*] — *i. e.* Their own counsels and projects, which they followed in opposition to the commandments of God.

- 44 Yet he regarded them in their affliction,
When he heard their complaint.
- 45 And he remembered his covenant with them :
He pitied them, according to the multitude of his mercies :
- 46 And he excited compassion for them,
Among those who had taken them captives. [nations :
- 47 Save us, O Jehovah, our God ! and gather us from among the
That we may give thanks to thy holy name ;
That we may celebrate thy praise.
- 48 Blessed be Jehovah, God of Israel !
From everlasting to everlasting.
And let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye Jehovah !
-

PSALM CVII.

THERE is nothing belonging to this Psalm by which it may be determined at what time it was written, though it is not unlikely to have been, as several of those which immediately precede it were, soon after the return from captivity ; at least, the first part of it is altogether agreeable to such a supposition, as it is specially applicable to exiles and captives. Its general purpose is to call forth a powerful sentiment of the divine benignity by reviewing, in several instances, the care which Providence extends to men, and the promptitude with which the blessed God listens to the supplications that are addressed to him in seasons of trouble and difficulty.

The composition is divided into five parts ; each of the first four of which is terminated by a kind of general chorus, which repeats an earnest exhortation to those whose sorrows have been relieved, to acknowledge the favours which they have received, and to express their sincere and fervent gratitude on account of them. The whole depicts, in very lively colours, the vicissitudes of the life of man ; and directs to the omnipotence and mercy of God as the sole means of relief and support under them.

- 1 GIVE ye thanks unto Jehovah ! for he is good :
For his mercy is everlasting.
- 2 Let them whom Jehovah hath redeemed declare it :
Whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy :
- 3 And hath gathered out of the countries ;
From the east and the west, from the north and the south.

- 4 They were wandering in a desert, in a lonely path ;
They found no city in which to dwell :
- 5 Hungry and thirsty, their spirit failed in them :
- 6 Then they cried unto Jehovah in their affliction,
And he rescued them from their distress :
- 7 He directed them also by the right path ;
So that they came to a city in which they might dwell.
- 8 Let them praise Jehovah for his goodness,
And his wonderful works to the children of men.
- 9 For he satisfieth the thirsty ;
The hungry he filleth with plenty.
- 10 They who were dwelling in darkness and in the shadow of death,
Imprisoned in affliction and iron ;
- 11 Because they had rebelled against the commands of God,
And had rejected the counsel of the high God ;
- 12 Whose heart he had subdued by trouble,
So that they fell without a helper ;
- 13 They cried unto Jehovah in their affliction,
And he saved them from their distress :
- 14 He brought them forth out of darkness and the shadow of death ;
He burst their bonds asunder.
- 15 Let them praise Jehovah for his goodness,
And his wonderful works to the children of men.
- 16 For he breaketh the gates of brass,
And cutteth the bars of iron asunder.
- 17 Fools, on account of their transgression,
And because of their iniquities, are afflicted :
- 18 They are disgusted with every kind of food,
And draw near to the gates of death :
- 19 Then they cry unto Jehovah in their trouble,
He saveth them from their distresses :
- 20 He issueth his command, and healeth them ;
And rescueth them from impending destruction.

- 21 Let them praise Jehovah for his goodness,
And his wonderful works to the children of men.
- 22 And let them offer the sacrifices of thanksgiving,
And declare his works with rejoicing.
- 23 They who go down to the sea in ships,
Who perform business in the great waters ;
- 24 They see the works of Jehovah,
And his wonders in the deep :
- 25 For he commandeth, and raiseth a tempestuous wind,
Which lifteth up the deep waves :
- 26 They ascend up to heaven, they descend again to the deeps ;
Their spirit faileth because of trouble :
- 27 They reel to and fro, they stagger like a drunken man ;
And all their skill is exhausted :
- 28 Then they cry unto Jehovah in their trouble,
And he bringeth them out of their distresses :
- 29 He reduceth the tempest to quietness ;
He rendereth the waves tranquil.
- 30 Then they rejoice on account of the calm,
And he conducteth them to the haven of their desire.
- 31 Let them praise Jehovah for his goodness,
And his wonderful works to the children of men.
- 32 Let them exalt him also in the concourse of the people ;
And praise him in the assembly of the elders.
- 33 He turneth rivers into a desert,
And water-springs into dry ground ;
- 34 A fertile land into sterility ;
For the wickedness of its inhabitants.
- 35 He converteth the desert into pools of water,
And the dry ground into water-springs :

33. *He turneth rivers, &c.*—It is not easy for us, who possess such an abundant supply of water in every part of our country, to form a due conception of the sufferings which were oc-

casioned by drying up the springs of water in the Oriental regions, or of the joy which must be produced by a renewal of this indispensable necessary of life.

- 36 There he causeth the hungry to dwell,
That they may build a habitable city ;
37 And sow the fields, and plant vineyards,
Which may yield a revenue of fruits.
38 He also blesseth them, that they greatly multiply ;
He suffereth not their cattle to decrease.
39 Again they are diminished, and brought low
By oppression, affliction, and sorrow :
40 He poureth contempt upon princes,
And causeth them to wander in the trackless desert.
41 He raiseth up the destitute above affliction ;
And maketh families to resemble a flock.
42 The upright behold, and they rejoice ;
And every iniquity stoppeth its mouth.
43 Whoever is wise, and observeth these events,
Such an one will understand the loving-kindnesses of Jehovah.

PSALM CVIII.*

THE inscription attributes this Psalm to the pen of David, who was without doubt its author, as it consists of the principal parts of two Psalms which were composed by him ; these are the fifty-seventh and the sixtieth. When, or by whom, these extracts were united in the form in which the Psalm before us presents them, we have no information, though we may determine it to have been done in order to construct a song of praise, after some remarkable successes which God had granted to the people of Israel against some of the surrounding nations.

A SONG. A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 O God ! my heart is fixed : I will sing :
I will sing praise with my whole soul.
2 Awake, lute and harp ! I will awake the dawn.

40. *Princes.*—Persons of high rank are the most exempt, in ordinary times, from destitution and want ; and misery must reach a great height when it invades them. No part of the world probably has witnessed so many and great reverses of this kind as the regions and countries of the East.

* For any explanations that may be needed, *vide* Note on Psalms LVII. and LX.

- 3 I will praise thee, O Jehovah ! among the peoples :
And I will sing praises unto thee among the nations ;
- 4 For thy mercy is great above the heavens ;
And thy truth unto the skies.
- 5 Be thou exalted, O God ! above the heavens :
And *show* thy glory above all the earth ;
- 6 That thy beloved people may be delivered ;
Save us by thy right hand, and answer us.
- 7 God hath spoken in his holiness ;—I exult :
I will divide Shechem, and measure the valley of Succoth.
- 8 Gilcad is mine, Manassch is mine ;
Ephraim is the guardian of my head ;
Judah is my lawgiver.
- 9 Moab is my washing-basin ; over Edom will I hurl my shoe :
Over Philistia will I triumph.
- 10 Who will conduct me into the strong city ?
Who will lead me into Edom ?
- 11 Wilt not thou, O God ! who didst reject us ?
Wilt not thou, O God ! go forth with our hosts ?
- 12 Give us help from trouble ;
For vain is the help of man.
- 13 By the help of God we shall perform great things ;
For he will trample down our enemies.

PSALM CIX.

THERE can be little hesitation in deciding upon the proper application of this Psalm. The apostle Peter expressly appropriates it to Judas, Acts i. 20 ; and we are thus directed to our blessed Saviour, as the person whose lamentations and prayers are recorded in it, occasioned by the perfidy, avarice, and cruelty of one of his disciples. The perusal of this Psalm brings before us an expressive illustration of the well-known words which St. Peter addressed to the confederates of Judas, after they had gratified their resentment by putting to death the divine Redeemer, and vainly fancied that they had for ever made an end of the dominion which he came into the world to establish. Acts ii. 23 : “ Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” We may not

be able to remove all the mystery which darkens our views of God's predeterminations, and incapacitates us for perceiving the manner in which they harmonize with the responsibility of men. Still both are undeniably true; and reason, instructed by revelation, forbids us to surrender the one or the other. The sin of Judas was the most immoral and unrighteous action which human malignity ever had the opportunity of perpetrating; while yet it formed one of the links of that vast series of events by which the most holy God designs to accomplish his own immense and inscrutable purposes. The decrees of Heaven effect no change in the moral nature of actions; they cannot turn vice into virtue, nor strip the one of its essential deformities by investing it with the characteristics and tendencies of the other. The one is the source of misery and anguish, and the other the parent of felicity and joy, by a necessity which has its seat in the immense and eternal perfection of the divine nature. Be it then our unalterable purpose, while we adore the wisdom and the love which rendered "the Captain of our salvation perfect through suffering," to obey his gospel, and to tread in his steps, that, in the regeneration of the world, we may be purified by him from every blemish of moral defilement, and fixed in the everlasting possession of true and ever increasing resemblance to himself, in whom the Deity will disclose, for ever and ever, the infinite perfection of his unchangeable existence and glory. *Vide Additional Notes.*

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 O GOD! object of my praise, be not silent : [mc :
- 2 For the mouth of the wicked, and of the deceitful, is opened against
They speak against me with a lying tongue.
- 3 They also surround me with words of hatred ;
And fight against me without cause.
- 4 In return for my love they are adversaries to me :
But I pray for them.
- 5 They also recompense me with evil for good ;
And with hatred for my love.
- 6 Set thou an unjust man over him :
Let an adversary stand at his right hand.

4. *But I pray for them.*—The expression in Hebrew is very short and imperfect, being nothing more than, "But I, prayer." Something like what is here supplied is necessary to make out the sense.

6. *Set thou an unjust, &c.*—The consecutive imprecations of this psalm have no parallel among those which were

written by David, if we except the sixty-ninth; and are such as lead to the conclusion that the Spirit of prophecy would have suggested them in no case, but the unique one, to which these two psalms refer, — that of the miserable traitor and apostate, with his confederates, who, after witnessing the conduct and listening to the instructions of his

- 7 When he is judged, let him be condemned,
And let his supplication be *deemed* a crime.
- 8 Let his days be few ;
And let another take his office.
- 9 Let his children be fatherless,
And his wife a widow.
- 10 Let his children be vagabonds, and beggars evermore ;
Let them beg at a distance from their ruined habitations.
- 11 Let the creditor take away all that he hath ;
And let foreigners plunder his possessions.
- 12 Let there be no one to show mercy to him ;
Nor any to favour his fatherless children.
- 13 Let his posterity be cut off ;
And let their name be obliterated from the next age.
- 14 Let Jehovah remember the iniquity of his fathers ;
And let not the sin of his mother be blotted out.
- 15 Let their sins be before Jehovah perpetually,
That he may cut off the remembrance of them from the earth :
- 16 Because he remembereth not to show mercy,
But persecuteth an afflicted and destitute man ;
That he may bring him to death, whose heart is broken.
- 17 As he loveth cursing, so let it come upon him :
As he delighteth not in blessing, so let it be far from him.
- 18 As he clotheth himself with execration as with his garment,
So let it come, as water into his inside, and as oil into his bones :

divine Master, could bring himself to perpetrate the dreadful deed of betraying and murdering the Prince of Life. It may perhaps appear as if there were some inconsistency between these fearful imprecations and the prayers which the divine Speaker says (ver. 4,) he offered for his enemies. It is, however, no greater inconsistency than exists between the prayer which the blessed Saviour offered at his death,—"Father, forgive them,"—and the predictions which he himself delivered, respecting his future appearance as the judge and punisher of the finally unbelieving and impenitent. Sinful men may deprive themselves of

the benefits of Christ's prayers, and thus expose themselves to the curse of him who, though he has appeared as "the Lamb of God," will hereafter be manifested as "the Lion of the tribe of Judah."

18. *As water, &c.*—The meaning of this image is, "let cursing, in which he takes so much delight, become an essential part of himself, as water which enters the stomach is assimilated and promotes life ; and as oil, employed for anointing, penetrates to the bones, and becomes as it were a part of them,—so let execration and malevolence become the very substance of his being.

- 19 Let it be to him like the garment that covereth him ;
And for a girdle with which he may continually be girt.
- 20 May this be the recompense of my adversaries from Jehovah !
Even of them who speak evil against my life.
- 21 But thou, O Jehovah Lord ! assist me for thy name's sake :
Because thy mercy is excellent, deliver me.
- 22 For I am afflicted and destitute ;
And my heart is pierced within me.
- 23 I am departing like the shadow when it declineth ;
I am agitated to and fro like the locust.
- 24 My knees are feeble from abstinence ;
And my flesh is destitute of fatness.
- 25 I am a subject of reproach for them ;
They look upon me, they wag their head.
- 26 Help me, O Jehovah, my God !
Save me according to thy mercy :
- 27 That they may know this to be thy hand ;
That thou, Jehovah, doest it. [ashamed :
- 28 Let them curse, but bless thou ; when they arise let them be
But let thy servant rejoice.
- 29 Let my adversaries be clothed with shame ;
And let them be covered with confusion, as with a mantle.
- 30 I will exceedingly praise Jehovah with my mouth ;
In the midst of multitudes I will glorify him.
- 31 For he standeth at the right hand of the afflicted,
To preserve him from them that condemn him to death.

PSALM CX.

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ claims for himself the application of this prophetic ode ; Matt. xxii. 41 ; Mark xii. 35 ; Luke xx. 41 ; and the apostle Paul constructs, upon this application, an argument for the everlasting priesthood of his divine Master. Heb. vii. 1. The Psalm very closely resembles the second Psalm, both in subject and manner, and is, beyond all reasonable

23. *The shadow.*—*scil.* Of the setting sun.

— *The locust,*] which is borne about by the wind.

question, to be interpreted as a direct prophecy of the kingdom and final triumph of the Messiah. It is delivered in the form of an oracle, given by Jehovah to the anointed King, in which the divine omnipotence and veracity are pledged to establish his reign and his priesthood, by the overthrow of every earthly power that shall dare to oppose. The last verse affords an indication of the labours and difficulties which he was destined to undergo, and of the refreshment and support which would be afforded to him under them.

A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 JEHOVAH hath said to my Lord, "Sit thou at my right hand,
"Until I make thy enemies thy footstool."
- 2 Jehovah will send forth the sceptre of thy power from Zion :
Reign thou in the midst of thy enemies.
- 3 Thy people shall willingly submit, in the day of thy power,
In consecrated vestments. Abundant shall be the dew of thy youth,
Beyond the dew of the womb of the morning.
- 4 Jehovah sweareth, and will not repent,
"Thou shalt be a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedek."
- 5 The Lord at thy right hand will smite kings,
In the day of his indignation.

3. *Thy people shall willingly, &c.*—The people here intended are all those who voluntarily obey the gospel of Christ, at the time when his glory and regal dignity are displayed. They are said to be in consecrated vestments,—an image drawn from the holy garments, in which the priests, under the law, were attired. One of the descriptions of Christians is, that they are "a royal priesthood," 1 Pet. ii. 9, which the author of the Apocalypse expresses by "priests and kings." Rev. i. 6. So that they grace the triumph of the Messiah by the splendour and beauty of their appearance.

—*Abundant shall be, &c.*—In this passage the voluntary subjects of Christ's kingdom are represented as the offspring of his youth and strength; and the greatness of their number is expressed by a comparison with the sparkling dew-drops of the dawning-day, which ornament the shrubs, plants, and herbage, which they are said to exceed in multitude. True Christians are very frequently

said to be children of God and of Christ; "born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." 1 Pet. i. 23. This is not in the least degree at variance with their being the voluntary subjects of Christ's kingdom, for the exercise of his power towards them removes their reluctance, and renders them cheerfully submissive to his will.—*Vide* Ephes. ii. 1—10.

4. *A priest for ever, after the order, &c.*—The peculiarity of Melchisedek's order consisted in the singular circumstance of his being at once a king and a priest. He was king of Salem, in later days Jerusalem, and a priest of the High God. Gen. xiv. 18. The priesthood of Christ is, therefore, of the order of Melchisedek, because he unites in himself, by the sovereign appointment of his Father, the regal dignity and the priestly office. See Additional Notes.

5. *The Lord at thy right hand.*—These words appear to be addressed by the pro-

- 6 He will punish the nations, he will fill all places with the dead :
 He will smite the head in many countries.
 7 He will drink of the torrent in the road ;
 Therefore will he lift up his head.

PSALM CXI.

THE purpose for which this song of praise was composed appears to be a public and solemn celebration of the divine glory and majesty ; but by whom it was written, or at what time, we cannot ascertain. In agreement with many other Psalms, which were written for the same purposes, it contains several allusions to the power and goodness of God, which had been so illustriously displayed to the descendants of Israel, when they were rescued from the servitude and degrading bondage by which they were affected in Egypt. From the excellent laws which were at that period delivered to the people, the Psalm takes occasion to celebrate the wisdom and sanctity of God ; to commend his wonderful actions to the attention of the nation, which had derived such singular benefits from them ; and to remind them, that their highest wisdom and happiness were inseparably associated with obedience and submission to their heavenly Sovereign and Benefactor.

- 1 HALLELUJAH ! I will praise Jehovah with my whole heart :
 In the concourse and the assembly of the upright.
 2 The works of Jehovah are great :
 Searched out by all who take delight in them.

phet, the writer of the psalm, to Jehovah, who is described in ver. 1 as setting the Messiah at his right hand ; and the purport of them is, to announce the majestic achievements of the anointed King, in finally establishing his empire, and overcoming his adversaries, by the assistance which Jehovah had declared he would afford.

7. *He will drink, &c.*—The employment of the Messiah is here represented as that of a mighty conqueror ; who, though somewhat fatigued by the pursuit of his vanquished and flying foes, yet stays it not by waiting for regal provisions, but hastily drinks of the torrent-stream with which he meets, and thus, by

satisfying his thirst, is enabled, with erect posture and renewed vigour, to follow his routed enemies.

PSALM CXI.

1. *Hallelujah !*—I have retained the original untranslated, as the meaning of it, “ Praise ye Jehovah,” is too well known to create any obscurity.

2. *Searched out.*—This is true of every work of God. The productions of nature—the moral rules—and the transcendent grace of his revealed truth—are alike investigated by those whose hearts are influenced by the love of genuine science, and the grandeur of moral beauty.

- 3 His work is glorious and splendid ;
His righteousness is everlasting.
- 4 He hath made a memorial of his wonders :
Jehovah is gracious and compassionate.
- 5 He giveth sustenance to them that fear him ;
He remembereth his covenant for ever.
- 6 He hath shown his people the greatness of his works,
By giving them the inheritance of the nations.
- 7 The works of his hands are verity and righteousness :
All his commands are right.
- 8 They are established for ever ;
Founded in truth and uprightness. [for ever :
- 9 He sent redemption to his people ; he commanded his covenant
Holy and venerable is his name.
- 10 The fear of Jehovah is the source of wisdom ;
Therefore wise are all they who obey his laws ;
Their praises will continue for ever.

PSALM CXII.

THE design of this Psalm is similar to that of the hundred and eleventh ; and it consists chiefly of a eulogy upon those who, with satisfaction and pleasure, regulate their conduct by a sacred regard to the commandments of God. Prosperity and affluence are assured to such persons ; a distinguishing feature in whose character is here intimated to be, their good will to others, and their readiness to afford them all such assistance as they may have in their power to communicate. A pledge of relief from adversity and sorrow is presented to them ; their freedom from anxious fears and perplexities, in difficult emergencies, is stated ; and the due recompense of all their piety and virtue is engaged to them. The conclusion is addressed to men of contrary character, whose painful sensations, at the time of retribution, and their hopeless extinction and misery are placed before them.

4. *A memorial.*]—His works are themselves the memorial of their Author—ever representing to men the existence and glory of his nature.

10. *The source of wisdom.*]—i. e. The principle whence it springs, and the fountain from which it flows.

10. *Their praises.*]—In the original the pronoun is singular, but used, I think, distributively, as is frequent—for the author is not speaking of God, but of those wise and pious persons whose names will be in everlasting remembrance.

- 1 HALLELUJAH ! Blessed is the man who feareth Jehovah :
Who taketh great delight in his commandments.
- 2 His offspring will be powerful in the earth :
The posterity of the upright will be blessed for ever.
- 3 Wealth and opulence are in his house ;
The fruits of his righteousness are perpetual.
- 4 Light ariseth upon the upright, in darkness ;
Upon the kind, the merciful, and the just.
- 5 Happy is the man who is compassionate, and lendeth :
Who regulateth his affairs with discretion :
- 6 For he will never be moved :
A righteous man is an everlasting memorial.
- 7 He is not alarmed at adverse tidings ;
His heart is firm, trusting in Jehovah.
- 8 His heart is steadfast, he feareth not ;
Until he beholdeth the punishment of his enemies.
- 9 He largely distributeth to those who are indigent :
The fruit of his beneficence is ever enduring :
His horn will be exalted with honour.
- 10 The wicked will see, and be incensed :
He will gnash with his teeth, and pine away :
The desire of the wicked will fail.

PSALM CXIII.

THE grand theme of this Psalm is the surpassing majesty of God, and the greatness of his condescension to those who are the objects of his kind regard. It celebrates his universal government, which delights to raise the low, to elevate the depressed, and to impart the most pleasing benefits to the indigent and neglected. If this Psalm is a production of David, which, however, we cannot ascertain, it affords an expressive instance of the sense which he

4. *Upon the kind, &c.*—These words are commonly understood in the nominative case, and referred to God. But they are best taken in apposition with the upright, who has just been mentioned.

6. *An everlasting memorial.*—See Note on Psalm cxi. 4.

8. *Until.*—This is not to be taken as if his freedom from fear would continue no longer, but is to be extended to all future times.

entertained of the singular favours which had been imparted to him. Whether this be so or not, the Psalm offers us an exact representation of the conduct of Providence, which is continually producing the greatest changes in the circumstances and condition of men, and thus manifesting the entire subjection of all events to the sovereign will of the Most High.

- 1 HALLELUJAH ! Praise ye, O ye servants of Jehovah,
Praise ye the name of Jehovah !
- 2 Blessed be Jehovah's name,
From henceforth, even for ever !
- 3 From the rising of the sun to his going down,
Let the name of Jehovah be praised.
- 4 Jehovah is high above all nations ;
His glory transcendeth the heavens.
- 5 Who is like to Jehovah, our God ?
That maketh his abode on high,
- 6 And humbleth himself
To behold the heavens, and the earth ?
- 7 He raiseth the poor from the dust ;
He elevateth the indigent from a low condition ;
- 8 To place him among princes ;
Among the princes of his people.
- 9 He rendereth the childless woman fruitful ;
She becometh a joyful mother of children. Hallelujah.

PSALM CXIV.

A COMMEMORATION of the stupendous miracles which accompanied the deliverance of the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt, forms the subject of this Psalm. It indicates the sensibility which was shown by all nature when the majesty of God was thus exhibited to men. It was an object of great importance and never-failing concern, to keep alive in the bosoms of these people the history of their ancestors, that they might, by due reflection upon it, be preserved from the inexpressible evils of idolatry and disobedience, to

7. *From a low condition.*—Eng. Trans.
Out of a dunghill. — This is probably
the sense of the Hebrew term here used ;

but it seems preferable to render it by a
less disagreeable term, indicative of the
same general meaning.

which they manifested so strange an inclination. True Christians will readily transfer the sentiments of this Psalm to their own condition, and, by a frequent commemoration of the unspeakable gifts of God to them, elevate their affections to the exercise of fervent thanksgiving, and more deeply impress upon their hearts the inexpressible obligations under which they are laid by the grace and blessings of their divine Redeemer.

- 1 WHEN Israel departed from Egypt,
The house of Jacob from a people of strange language,
- 2 Judah was holy to Jehovah ;
Israel was his dominion.
- 3 The sea beheld, and fled :
Jordan was turned backward.
- 4 The mountains leaped like rams ;
The hills like the young of the flock.
- 5 Wherefore, O sea ! didst thou fly ?
Thou Jordan, wherefore wast thou turned backward ?
- 6 Ye mountains, why leaped ye like rams ?
Ye hills, like the young of the flock ?
- 7 Tremble thou, O earth ! at the presence of the Lord ;
At the presence of the God of Jacob ;
- 8 Who turned the rock into a pool of water :
The flint into a fountain of waters.

PSALM CXV.

THERE is nothing certain to be concluded respecting the author of this Psalm, or the occasion on which it was written. It is conjectured, however, to belong to the time of Hezekiah, and to have been composed in celebration of the very extraordinary deliverance which was afforded to that pious prince and to his people, from the blasphemies and arrogance of Sennacherib, the king of Assyria. 2 Chron. xxxii. ; Isa. xxxvi. 37. Whether this conjecture be agreeable to the truth, we are unable to say, though a considerable probability that it is so arises from the language of the Psalm itself. It commences

8. *Into a pool.*—The divine poet represents the very substance of the rock as being converted into water, not lite-

rally, but poetically—thus ornamenting his sketch of the wondrous power displayed on this occasion.

with an implied reference to some great deliverance, for which the people are introduced in the act of giving praises to God, and renouncing every thought of ascribing the benefit to any human wisdom or ability. It proceeds to triumph over the nations that had reproached them with the non-appearance of their God to protect them; they had said, "Where is their God? let him deliver them now if he is able." The reply of the Israelites to this vain and presumptuous taunt was, "Our God is in the heavens." Then follows a lively and expressive contrast between the living God, the God of Israel, and the senseless objects to which men, little less stupid, presented their homage. The pious confidence of the Israelites in the favour of God is then expressed, and their assured belief that he would continue to bless them and their offspring with his favour and mercy. The Psalm terminates with an ascription of dominion to God, whose kingdom is in heaven, but who grants the earth to the sons of men for their abode and comfort, and whom it becomes the living to praise and honour before they descend to the silence and inactivity of the tomb. See Appendix, No. 2.

- 1 NOT unto us, O Jehovah! not unto us, but to thy name be glory:
On account of thy benignity and faithfulness.
- 2 Wherefore should the nations say,
"Where is now their God?"
- 3 But our God is in the heavens:
He doeth whatever is pleasing to him.
- 4 Their idols are silver and gold,
The work of men's hands:
- 5 They have mouths, but speak not;
Eyes have they, but they see not;
- 6 They have ears, but hear not;
Noses have they, but they smell not;
- 7 They have hands, but handle not;
Feet have they, but they walk not:
Neither speak they through their throat.
- 8 They who make them resemble them;
And all those who confide in them.
- 9 But Israel confideth in Jehovah:
He is their help and their shield.

9. *Israel confideth, &c.*—All the ancient versions read this and the next two verses in the indicative; and they are followed by the greater number of interpreters, be-

cause it is more agreeable to the occasion than the imperative, which is used in the English Translation, and is also found in the present copies of the Hebrew text.

- 10 The house of Aaron confideth in Jehovah :
He is their help and their shield.
- 11 They who fear Jehovah, in Jehovah place their confidence :
He is their help and their shield.
- 12 Jehovah hath remembered us ; he blesseth us ;
He blesseth the house of Israel ;
He blesseth the house of Aaron ;
- 13 He blesseth them who fear Jehovah ;
Both the small and the great.
- 14 Jehovah will multiply you more and more,
You, and your children.
- 15 Ye are the blessed of Jehovah ;
Who made the heavens, and the earth.
- 16 The heavens, the heavens are Jehovah's :
But the earth he giveth to the children of men.
- 17 The dead praise not Jehovah ;
Nor any who descend into silence.
- 18 But we will bless Jehovah,
* Henceforth, and for ever. Hallelujah.

PSALM CXVI.

WE have as little information respecting the author and the occasion of this Psalm as of the last. We are therefore left to form the best conjectures in our power upon the subject. Some of the critics think it was written by David ; while others suppose it to relate to the recovery of Hezekiah from the dangerous sickness, an account of which is given in Isa. xxxviii. I am, upon the whole, most inclined to the former of these opinions ; and, if this be correct, we must assign the composition of the Psalm to the period when David had subdued the rebellion which was excited by Absalom. The principal reason of this judgment is drawn from ver. 11, which seems to be more applicable to David than to Hezekiah ; in addition to which, it may be remarked, that nothing is found in the Psalm which certainly authorises us to regard it as having a reference to disease rather than to other situations of danger.

The pious author begins by declaring his affectionate gratitude for the great mercies which had been extended to him ; he refers to the earnest prayers which he had offered to God during the continuance of his distresses, and pledges himself to pay the vows which he had made, by sacrifices of thanksgiving, performed in the most public and solemn manner.

- 1 I LOVE Jehovah :
For he hath heard my voice, and my supplication.
- 2 Because he hath inclined his ear to me,
Therefore I will call upon him as long as I live.
- 3 The bonds of death encompassed me ;
The pains of Hades were present with me ;
I experienced trouble and sorrow :
- 4 Then I called upon the name of Jehovah ;
“ O Jehovah ! deliver me.”
- 5 Gracious is Jehovah, and righteous :
Our God is compassionate.
- 6 Jehovah preserveth the sincere :
I was exhausted, and he helped me.
- 7 Return, O my soul ! unto thy rest ;
For Jehovah hath bestowed great benefits upon thee.
- 8 Thou hast delivered me from death ;
My eyes from tears, my feet from falling.
- 9 I shall walk before Jehovah in the land of the living.
- 10 I believed,—though I said,
I am greatly afflicted :
- 11 In my haste I said, “ All men are liars.”
- 12 What shall I render to Jehovah,
For all his benefits conferred upon me ?
- 13 I will take the cup of salvation,
And call upon the name of Jehovah.
- 14 I will pay my vows unto Jehovah,
Even in the presence of all his people.

3. *Bonds of death.*]—See note, Ps. xviii. 4.

10. *I believed, &c.*]—The enunciation of this verse is elliptical and obscure. The sense appears to be,—I was so greatly distressed and agitated, that under the influence of strong and hasty feelings, I accused all men of falsehood ; yet, though my passion led me to this unbecoming conclusion, I still believed in God, in his providence, and his universal care of his servants, so that I very soon escaped from the paroxysm of anger by which I had been overcome.

13. *Cup of salvation.*]—This is a reference to the practice which was in use in the offering of eucharistical sacrifices. During the feast that followed these sacrifices, the head of the family took a cup of wine into his hands, and offered solemn and open acknowledgments of the mercies which had been experienced ; he then drank, and delivered the cup to the other partakers of the feast.

14. *My vows.*]—The promises which he had made in trouble.

- 15 Precious in the estimation of Jehovah
Is the life of his saints.
- 16 O Jehovah ! thou hast loosed my bonds,
Who am thy servant, the son of thy handmaid.
- 17 I will offer to thee a sacrifice of thanksgiving ;
And I will call upon the name of Jehovah.
- 18 I will pay my vows unto Jehovah,
Even in the presence of all his people.
- 19 In the courts of the house of Jehovah,
In the midst of thee, O Jerusalem ! Hallelujah !
-

PSALM CXVII.

THIS short hymn of praise, of the writing of which we have no account, is supposed, with probability, to have been used at the close of the public and solemn services of the temple. It most likely was composed after the return from captivity.

- 1 PRAISE ye Jehovah ! all ye nations :
Praise him, all ye peoples.
- 2 For his benignity is great towards us ;
And the faithfulness of Jehovah is everlasting. Hallelujah !
-

PSALM CXVIII.

THE purposes for which this triumphal ode was written cannot be mistaken, as it so clearly expresses them in every part of it. No doubt can be admitted

15. *The life of his saints.*—This may be thought a great deviation from the common version ; but, in fact, both that and this have the same import when attentively considered. The death of God's saints is said to be regarded by him as precious and valuable ; now that which we esteem highly we do not readily allow to pass from our own keeping. God is, therefore, represented as not readily allowing his servants to die, so that the strict sense is that which is here given ; the life of God's servants is valuable,

therefore he preserves it, as in the present case, in which the Psalmist had been delivered from imminent peril of death. No other meaning has any relation to the subject of which the writer is speaking. See Dathe and Grotius upon the psalm. The words of the latter learned critic are, " God does not readily grant permission to wicked men to take away the lives of the just. Those things which we esteem valuable we do not easily bestow upon others."

that it was composed to celebrate a remarkable deliverance from the combined efforts of very powerful and determined adversaries. But what precise deliverance it was, it is hopeless to think of ascertaining, with any approach to probability. Some of the commentators assign it to the time of David; others to that of Hezekiah; and by some it is supposed to belong to the period in which the Maccabees performed their illustrious deeds. I shall not presume to decide which of these is the most agreeable to truth. It will be more to our purpose to observe, that the Psalm was used on occasion of a solemn procession that was formed by the king, or chief magistrate, whoever he might be, the priests, and the people at large, of all ranks, in order to perform public sacrifices of thanksgiving at the temple. The first part of it relates to the prince whose feelings and sentiments are recorded; and this part appears to have been sung during the procession, till it arrived at the gates of the temple: this part occupies the first twenty-one verses. The second part, which is appropriated to the priests and the people, who express their joy on the occasion, and offer their supplications for their prince, was sung when the procession had arrived at the temple, and the persons who composed it were entering. The Psalm entirely consists of praise to Jehovah for his mercy in answering the prayers of his people, interspersed with declarations of the formidable nature of the conflict in which they had been engaged, and expressions of the inestimable superiority of divine assistance above all human help.

- 1 GIVE ye thanks unto Jehovah, for he is good :
For his mercy is everlasting.
- 2 Let Israel now say,
That his mercy is everlasting.
- 3 Let the house of Aaron now say,
That his mercy is everlasting.
- 4 Let them now who fear Jehovah say,
That his mercy is everlasting.
- 5 I called upon Jehovah in distress ;
Jehovah answered me, and set me at liberty.
- 6 Jehovah is with me, I will not fear :
What can man do unto me ?
- 7 Jehovah is with my helpers :
Therefore I look with delight upon my foes.

2. *Let Israel now say.*—The word “now” in this, and other parts of the Psalm, is not a mark of time, but of intensity—equivalent to, “I beseech, intreat.”

5. *And set me at liberty.*—Literally, “He answered me in a wide place.”

7. *I look with delight.*—The Hebrew verb here used, denotes looking at with emotion, in some instances of displeasure: here, as in other cases, with delight at the contemplation of a vanquished adversary.

- 8 It is better to trust in Jehovah
Than to put confidence in man.
- 9 It is better to trust in Jehovah
Than to put confidence in princes.
- 10 All the nations encompassed me ;
But in the name of Jehovah I destroyed them.
- 11 They encompassed me, yea they encompassed me ;
But in the name of Jehovah I destroyed them. [thorns:
- 12 They encompassed me like bees; they are extinct as a fire of
For in the name of Jehovah I destroyed them.
- 13 Thou didst vehemently assault me, that I might fall !
But Jehovah helped me.
- 14 Jehovah is my strength, and my song :
He also is become my salvation.
- 15 The voice of joy and safety is in the tents of the righteous :
The right hand of Jehovah affordeth strength.
- 16 The right hand of Jehovah is exalted ;
, The right hand of Jehovah affordeth strength.
- 17 I shall not die, but I shall live,
That I may relate the acts of Jehovah.
- 18 Jehovah hath severely chastised me ;
But he hath not given me up to death.
- 19 Open to me the gates of the sanctuary ;
That I may enter, and praise Jehovah :
- 20 This gate of Jehovah,
Into which the righteous enter.
- 21 I will praise thee, for thou hast answered me ;
And art become my salvation.
- 22 The stone which the builders rejected
Is become the head stone of the angle :

10. *All the nations.*—We cannot say who these nations were, further than that they were contiguous to Judea, and had entered into an alliance against it.

12. *A fire of thorns.*—An image descriptive of the rapidity of the conquest. Such a fire is vehement and furious, but speedily extinguished.

13. *Thou didst.*—This is an apo-

strophe addressed to the absent foe, as if now present.

19. *Open to me, &c.*—The procession had now advanced to the entrance of the temple; and the priests, who were in attendance, were directed now to throw wide open the gates for the reception of the multitudes.

22. *The stone which the builders, &c.*]

- 23 From Jehovah is this :
It is wonderful in our eyes.
- 24 This is the day which Jehovah hath made ;
We will exult, and rejoice in it.
- 25 Grant safety now, O Jehovah !
O Jehovah ! grant now prosperity.
- 26 Blessed be he that cometh in the name of Jehovah !
We bless you from out of the house of Jehovah.
- 27 God Jehovah hath shined upon us :
Bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar.
- 28 Thou art my God, and I will praise thee :
Thou art my God, and I will exalt thee.
- 29 Give ye thanks unto Jehovah, for he is good :
For his mercy is everlasting.

—These seem to be the words of the priests and the people, and to relate to the Sovereign Prince, whose exaltation and victories are celebrated. From the want of information respecting the previous circumstances of this prince, we are unable to determine to what they precisely refer. The very learned critic, J. D. Michaelis, has some strange trifling upon the subject: — He endeavours to make it appear that these words literally relate to a stone, which the architects had rejected and cast aside, but which they were subsequently induced to fix in the most important part of the building. I entertain no doubt that there was an apophthegm of this kind in use, in the conversation of the people, which they employed to express their admiration of such an alteration in the condition of any thing which had been rejected, and then accepted with approbation. Some difficulties had occurred in the election of this prince, occasioned by the opposition

of some influential persons in the state ; but these were removed, and all parties now concurred in his elevation, acknowledging him as their sovereign, and uniting in recommending him to the favour and protection of Heaven. This view of the case derives great support from the references that are made to this passage in the New Testament ; for, when our Saviour quotes it in his discourse with the chief-priests and elders, Matt. xxi. 42, Mark xii. 10, he does so, without any intimation that the psalm in which it was found was generally prophetic of himself, but he refers to it as a well-known saying, which was quite appropriate to himself.

24. *This is the day, &c.*—This day of happiness and triumph had been granted to them by the gracious help of God, in enabling them to overcome their adversaries, and on which they unite their prayers for the continued prosperity of their country, and the happiness and safety of their sovereign.

PSALM CXIX.

THERE is no reason for hesitation respecting the author of this Psalm, or the period at which it was written, as it is next to certain, from the contents of it, that David was the writer, and that it was composed during the long and harassing exile into which he was driven by the injustice and ill will of Saul.

The predominant features of this pathetic and most devout hymn are the intense regard which was felt by its author for the word and law of God, and the delight and consolation which he derived from his assiduous study of them. It is interspersed throughout with earnest entreaties for divine aid to assist him in obtaining a more perfect acquaintance with the law and a more entire obedience to its requirements. We find in it many fervent supplications for deliverance from his afflicted condition, combined with warm protestations of his entire innocence with regard to the accusations that were alleged against him by his adversaries. He mingles with his devout aspirations arguments why the great object of his devotion should grant a favourable reception to his prayers, drawn from his love to the precepts of the law, the integrity of his heart, the piety of his life, the wickedness of his adversaries, and the truth and faithfulness of God in fulfilling the promises which he had made. Altogether it places before us the most affecting instance of sincere, spiritual, and enlightened devotion which the holy Scriptures, rich as they are in such examples, contain. Thrice happy and blessed are they who are imbued with the temper which is displayed in every part of this Psalm, and whose hearts, feelings, and conduct are in accordance with it!

The poem is composed with great attention to the form of it. It is distributed into twenty-two parts, corresponding with the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Each of these parts consists of eight verses, and has prefixed to it one of the Hebrew letters, in regular succession, which letter is made the initial of each verse in the part to which it is attached; so that every verse in the first part, to which Aleph is prefixed, begins with that letter; every verse in the second part, which has Beth prefixed, commences with it; and so on to the end. This is an ingenious artifice, and was of great help to the memory of those who were desirous of a thorough remembrance of the Psalm; but which it would be difficult, if not impracticable, to imitate in a version into any other language. There are several Psalms in which contrivances somewhat similar are employed; but, as these minutiae necessarily disappear in a translation, I have passed them without notice; the more so, because they are of no utility to the readers of an English, or of any version. In the Psalm before us some notice of this peculiar construction was requisite, to account for the form in which it appears.

ALEPH.

1 BLESSED are the upright in the way !

Who walk in the law of Jehovah.

1. *In the way.*] — The course of life is here represented under the figure of a road or way, in which men are continually advancing. The way of the upright leads to life, that of the wicked to death.

- 2 Blessed are they who observe his testimonies !
Who seek him with their whole heart.
3 Truly they do no iniquity :
They walk in his way.
4 Thou hast commanded
That thy precepts be diligently observed.
5 O ! that my ways were confirmed,
To observe thy statutes.
6 Then shall I not be ashamed,
When I regard all thy commandments.
7 I will praise thee with an upright heart,
When I shall have learned thy righteous appointments.
8 I will observe thy statutes :
Forsake me not altogether.

BETH.

- 9 How may a young man purify his way ?
By observance of thy law.
10 With my whole heart do I seek thee :
Let me not wander from thy commandments.
11 Thy word do I lay up in my heart,
That I may not sin against thee.
12 Blessed art thou, O Jehovah !
Teach me thy statutes.
13 With my lips, I relate
All the appointments of thy mouth.
14 I rejoice in the way of thy testimonies,
As much as in all riches.
15 I meditate upon thy precepts,
And I regard thy ways.
16 I greatly delight in thy statutes :
I forget not thy word.

2. *His testimonies.*.]—We have several terms frequently occurring in this Psalm, as testimonies, commandments, statutes, precepts, &c. all of which convey the same general notion of rule or preceptive

regulation, which is quite sufficient, without inquiring into the specific differences between them, for which an etymological investigation would be requisite, more curious than useful.

GIMEL.

- 17 Bestow benefits upon thy servant,
That I may live, and observe thy word.
- 18 Open thou my eyes,
That I may discern the mysteries of thy law.
- 19 I am a stranger in the earth,
Hide not thy commandments from me.
- 20 My soul languisheth through desire
For thy commandments, at all times.
- 21 Thou rebukest the proud; *they are* accursed,
Who wander from thy commandments.
- 22 Remove from me reproach and contempt;
For I observe thy testimonies.
- 23 Princes even sit and speak against me:
Thy servant meditateth on thy statutes.
- 24 Thy testimonies are indeed my delight;
They are the men of my council.

DALETH.

- 25 My soul cleaveth to the dust;
Revive me according to thy word.

18. *The mysteries.*—This word means things which are difficult and wonderful. The reference here is to the figures and adumbrations of the law, which so veiled and concealed the substances to which they related, that the mass of readers quite lost sight of them. The Psalmist therefore prays for divine illumination, to enable him to solve, at least in some degree, the enigmas in which future things were enveloped.

19. *I am a stranger, &c.*—A stranger in a foreign land is exposed to many difficulties and dangers, unless he have a skilful and a faithful guide; such a guide is the word of God to all who are desirous of proceeding safely. From the expression, "hide not," in the latter clause, we are not to suppose that God ever puts hinderances in the path of them that seek him; it is merely a different form of saying, "Open thou mine eyes," that I

may discern the truth and excellency of thy word.

20. *My soul languisheth, &c.*—Every intense exertion of mind has an influence, if it be long continued, to exhaust and impair the faculties in some degree. Such an effect is here alluded to; the close and assiduous attention which the Psalmist had paid, and the exertion of strong desire, which he had exercised, produced the feeling which he here speaks of. He is also to be regarded as using the language of poetry, which admits of stronger colouring than prosaic description.

23. *Princes even, &c.*—These were Saul's courtiers and David's enemies, who were ever plotting to accomplish his destruction. Of these, however, he takes little account, but directs his attention to the love of God, to reliance on his care for protection and deliverance.

25. *My soul cleaveth to the dust.*—By

- 26 I have declared my ways ; thou hast answered me :
Teach me thy statutes.
- 27 Grant me discernment in the way of thy statutes ;
Then will I contemplate thy mysteries.
- 28 My soul is bowed down with sorrow :
Raise me up according to thy word.
- 29 Remove from me the way of falsehood ;
And mercifully grant me thy law.
- 30 I choose the way of truth ;
Thy ordinances I set before me.
- 31 I cleave to thy testimonies :
O Jehovah ! put me not to shame.
- 32 I will run the way of thy commandments,
When thou shalt have enlarged my heart.

H F.

- 33 Teach me, O Jehovah ! the way of thy statutes,
That I may keep it to the end.
- 34 Grant me understanding, that I may observe thy law ;
That I may observe it with my whole heart.
- 35 Lead me in the path of thy commandments ;
For I delight in it.
- 36 Incline my heart to thy testimonies,
And not to covetousness.
- 37 Turn away my eyes from beholding vanity ;
Revive me in thy way.

dust is here probably meant the sepulchre or grave, as in Psalm xxii. 15, 29, so that the Psalmist is to be understood to say, The dangers which surround me are such as threaten my death ; and he immediately adds, "Revive me according to thy word,"—*i. e.* make me glad by delivering me from these perils, in agreement with the promises which thou hast given me. The observation of Calvin on this verse is, "Significat se de vita," &c. ; *i. e.* he means that he despaired of his life, as if he were fixed in the sepulchre.

26. *I have declared, &c.*]—He had

made known to God all his state, thoughts, ways, &c.

27. *Thy mysteries.*]—See Note on v. 18.

29. *Mercifully grant me, &c.*]—Graciously teach me the knowledge and practice of thy law.

32. *When thou shalt have enlarged my heart.*]—*i. e.* Set me free from the dangers and restraints that now distress me.

36. *Covetousness.*]—The meaning of this word is more extensive than avarice, and implies the desire of any gratifications which might lead to a neglect of the divine laws and institutions.

- 38 Confirm thy word to thy servant,
Who feareth thee.
39 Avert the reproach from me which I dread ;
For thy appointments are good.
40 Behold ! I long for thy precepts :
Revive me by thy faithfulness.

VAU.

- 41 Let thy mercies come to me, O Jchovah !
Thy salvation, according to thy word.
42 That I may answer them who reproach me ;
For I confide in thy word.
43 Take not out of my mouth the word that is altogether true ;
For I wait for thy judgment ;
44 That I may observe thy law
Continually, for ever.
45 That I may also walk at liberty ;
For I seek thy precepts.
46 I will speak of thy testimonies before kings ;
And will not be ashamed.
47 I will greatly delight in thy commandments,
Which I love.
48 My hands will I lift up at thy commandments, which I love ;
And I will contemplate thy statutes.

ZAIN.

- 49 Remember the word to thy servant,
On which thou hast caused me to hope:
50 This is my consolation in trouble ;
For thy word reviveth me.

43. *The word that is altogether true.*—By this word he means the answer that he had to make to the accusations of his enemies ; this answer, which asserted his innocency of the crimes with which they charged him, he declares to be altogether true ; and he entreats that God, as a

judge, would not suffer him to be deprived of the benefit of that answer, but pronounce a righteous sentence between them.

48. *My hands will I lift up, &c.*—*i. e.* I will signify, by my gestures, the admiration and love which I feel for thy laws.

- 51 The proud greatly deride me ;
 I decline not from thy law.
- 52 I remember, O Jehovah ! thy appointments in past time ;
 And I am consoled.
- 53 Dread seizeth me,
 Through the wicked, who forsake thy law.
- 54 Thy statutes are my songs,
 In the house of my pilgrimage.
- 55 I remember thy name, O Jehovah ! in the night ;
 And I observe thy law.
- 56 This I have,
 Because I observe thy precepts.

CHETH.

- 57 Jehovah is my portion :
 I resolve to observe thy words.
- 58 I entreat thy favour with my whole heart :
 Be merciful to me, according to thy word.
- 59 I reflect upon my ways ;
 And turn my feet to thy testimonies.
- 60 I make haste, and delay not,
 To observe thy commandments.
- 61 The toils of the wicked *surround* me ;
 I forget not thy law.
- 62 I rise up at midnight to give thanks to thee,
 On account of thy righteous appointments.
- 63 I am the friend of all who fear thee ;
 Of them who observe thy precepts.
- 64 The earth, O Jehovah ! is full of thy benignity :
 Teach me thy statutes.

TETH.

- 65 Thou hast done good to thy servant, O Jehovah !
 According to thy word.

53. *Dread seizeth me.*—The power and malice of my unrighteous enemies fills me with terror, like a destructive wind sweeping over me.

56. *This I have.*—*sc.* My song in the night.
 61. *The toils of the wicked, &c.*—They have spread around me their toils and nets, in the hope of ensnaring me to my ruin.

- 66 Teach me true discernment and knowledge ;
 For I believe thy commandments.
- 67 Before I was afflicted I went astray ;
 But now I observe thy word.
- 68 Thou art good, and doest good :
 Teach me thy statutes.
- 69 The proud frame falsehood against me :
 I observe thy precepts with the whole heart.
- 70 Their hearts are swollen with fat :
 I delight in thy law.
- 71 Affliction has been good for me ;
 For I have learned thy statutes.
- 72 The law of thy mouth is better to me,
 Than thousands of gold or silver.

JOD.

- 73 Thy hands did make and fashion me :
 Grant me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.
- 74 They who fear thee rejoice when they see me ;
 Because my hope is in thy word.
- 75 I know, O Jehovah ! that thy appointments are right :
 In faithfulness thou afflictest me.
- 76 Let now thy mercy be for my consolation,
 According to thy word to thy servant.
- 77 Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live ;
 For thy law is my delight. [sent me :
- 78 Let the proud be confounded, for without cause they misrep-
 I will meditate on thy precepts.
- 79 Let them who fear thee be attached to me ;
 And those who approve of thy testimonies.
- 80 Let my heart be perfect in thy statutes ;
 That I may not be confounded.

75. *Thy appointments.*]—The English Translation generally renders the original term, by the word "judgments;" which, in many cases, is so equivocal as to be very obscure. This word means justice,

the sentence of a judge,—statute, ordinance, manner or method, appointment, &c.; and it should be rendered, in each case, by the most appropriate of these words.

CAPIL.

- 81 My soul fainteth for thy salvation ;
I hope in thy word.
- 82 My eyes languish for the fulfilment of thy promise ;
I am saying, When wilt thou comfort me ?
- 83 For I am become like a leathern vessel in the smoke ;
I do not forget thy statutes.
- 84 How many are the days of thy servant ?
When wilt thou execute justice on my persecutors ?
- 85 The proud who desert thy law,
Are digging pits for me.
- 86 All thy commandments are faithful :
They unjustly persecute me : help thou me.
- 87 They have nearly reduced me to the earth ;
But I forsake not thy precepts.
- 88 Revive me, according to thy loving-kindness ;
That I may observe the testimonies of thy mouth.

LAMED.

- 89 O Jehovah ! for ever
Is thy word established in the heavens.

82. *For the fulfilment of thy promise.*]—Eng. Trans. *For thy word*, which is a verbal rendering, but yields a very imperfect and doubtful meaning. I have assigned to it what, I doubt not, is its true meaning. Nor does it appear to me to be necessary, in such cases, to look upon the words which are inserted to make up the sense, as if they were elliptical, or to mark them as such. We must suppose that the writers of the Hebrew Scriptures wrote them so as to be intelligible to their readers ; and it is, in my opinion, not requisite to mark as elliptical the terms which are inserted in English, necessary to give the sense in which the original readers understood them. In a few instances, the words necessary to be supplied may appear fit to be noticed, so that the reader of the translation may be apprised of the nature of

the insertion ;—this method is generally adopted throughout this version.

83. *Like a leathern vessel.*]—The vessels in which liquids are conveyed in the East, are fabricated of the skins of animals, which assume the appearance of leather ;—such vessels, by hanging long amidst the smoke of their habitations, become dry, hard, and shrivelled—hence the justness of the figure here used.

89. *Established in the heavens.*]—The design of these words is by no means obvious, and the interpreters vary greatly in their explanations. I have not met with any explanation that is altogether satisfactory, and shall, therefore, give what appears to me to be the true meaning. The design, in general, of the Psalmist is, to celebrate the immutability of the word of God : whatever He speaks is sure. To illustrate this position, he

- 90 Thy faithfulness is throughout all ages :
 Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth :
 91 They continue to this day, according to thy appointments ;
 For all are thy servants.
 92 Had not thy law been my delight,
 I should long ago have perished in my affliction.
 93 Never will I forget thy precepts ;
 For by them thou revivest me.
 94 I am thine : save me ;
 For I seek thy precepts.
 95 The wicked are waiting for me to destroy me :
 I contemplate thy statutes.
 96 I have seen the end of all perfection :
 Thy commandment is exceeding broad.

MEM.

- 97 How I love thy law !
 It is my contemplation all the day.
 98 Thou makest me wiser than all my teachers, by thy command-
 ments ;
 For they are ever my contemplation.
 99 I know more than any of my instructors ;
 For thy testimonies are my meditation.
 100 I am wiser than the aged ;
 Because I observe thy precepts.
 101 I restrain my feet from every evil way,
 That I may observe thy word.

refers to the creation of the heavens and of the earth ; these were alike formed by the word of God,—“ He spake, and it was done.” By virtue of that word, these vast productions abide through all ages, so that the word of God is established and displayed in heaven and upon earth. As the same word uttered all the precepts and institutions of the law, and all the promises of the covenants of mercy, the unchangeableness of these precepts and promises is verified and manifested by

the perpetual conservation of all these instances of physical power and energy.

96. *Of all perfection.*—All human things, however full, perfect, and admirable, are necessarily deficient and mutable ; but the law of God, like the nature of him from whom it proceeds, endureth for ever, and is in all respects complete and unalterable. We are to understand by law here, the whole revealed will of God, comprehensive of promise as well as precept.

- 102 I do not depart from thy appointments ;
 For thou teachest me.
- 103 Thy words are sweeter
 To my palate, and my mouth, than honey.
- 104 By thy precepts I acquire understanding ;
 Therefore I hate every false way.

NUN.

- 105 Thy word is a lamp to my feet,
 And a light to my path.
- 106 I have sworn, and will perform *my oath*,
 That I will observe thy righteous appointments.
- 107 I am greatly afflicted : revive me,
 O Jehovah ! according to thy word.
- 108 Accept now the voluntary offerings of my mouth ;
 And teach me thy appointments, O Jehovah !
- 109 My life is continually in my hand ;
 Yet I do not forget thy law.
- 110 The wicked lay a snare for me ;
 Yet I stray not from thy commandments.
- 111 I have taken thy testimonies as an inheritance for ever :
 For they are the joy of my heart.
- 112 I incline my heart to perform thy statutes ;
 Ever, unto the end.

SAMECH.

- 113 I hate wavering thoughts ;
 But thy law do I love.
- 114 Thou art my refuge, and my shield ;
 I hope in thy word.
- 115 Depart from me, ye doers of evil !
 For I will observe the commandments of my God.

109. *My life is continually in my hand.*]—His meaning is, that his life was in continual and imminent danger. The figure seems to be taken from the circumstance of any thing that is holden in the hand being in danger of plunder.

113. *I hate wavering thoughts.*]—The Hebrew word means division, wavering first to one thing then to another : the character which is depicted in James i. 6.

- 116 Sustain me, according to thy word, that I may live ;
And let me not be ashamed of my hope.
117 Hold me up, that I may be safe ;
And I will regard thy statutes continually.
118 Thou despisest all who wander from thy statutes ;
For their subtlety is vain.
119 Thou turnest away all the wicked of the earth like dross ;
Therefore I love thy testimonies.
120 My flesh trembleth through fear of thee :
And I reverence thy appointments ;

AIN.

- 121 I act with justice and righteousness :
Leave me not to my oppressors.
122 Pledge thyself to thy servant for good ;
Let not the proud oppress me.
123 My eyes fail for thy salvation,
And for thy faithful word.
124 Treat thy servant according to thy mercy ;
And teach me thy statutes.
125 I am thy servant ; grant me discernment,
That I may understand thy testimonies.
126 It is time for thee, O Jehovah ! to act :
For men set at nought thy law.
127 Therefore I love thy commandments
More than gold, even more than fine gold.

120. *My flesh trembleth.*—The strict sense of this place is, My flesh is affected with rigour, as when the hair stands on end. This state of horror was produced by a contemplation of the fearful destruction of wicked men, who are rejected like dross, ver. 119.

122. *Pledge thyself, &c.*—*i. e.* Grant to me assurance that thou wilt impart to me all needful good for my protection and safety.

123. *My eyes fail, &c.*—My situation is so distressing, and my desire for deliverance from it so intense, that I look

for it until my eyes are wearied and overcome.

127. *Therefore, &c.*—This is a conclusion drawn from what he had just said, respecting its being time for God to manifest his righteous judgment, by punishing them who set at nought his law. The course of reasoning is,—I am sure that thou wilt vindicate thy laws, and I therefore love them, not only because they are essentially good, but because obedience to them will insure the final happiness of all by whom it is exercised.

- 128 Therefore I esteem all thy precepts, all, to be right:
I hate every false way.

PE.

- 129 Thy testimonies are admirable ;
Therefore my soul observeth them.
130 The entrance of thy word giveth light ;
It giveth discernment to the sincere.
131 I open my mouth, and I pant ;
For I long for thy commandments.
132 Regard me, and be merciful to me ;
As thou art wont, to them that love thy name.
133 Establish my steps by thy word ;
Let no iniquity have dominion over me.
134 Deliver me from the oppression of man ;
Then will I observe thy precepts.
135 Make thy face to shine upon thy servant ;
And teach me thy statutes.
136 Streams of water run from my eyes,
Because men observe not thy law.

TSADDI.

- 137 Righteous art thou, O Jehovah !
And upright are thy appointments.
138 Righteous, and faithful exceedingly,
Are the testimonies which thou enjoinest.
139 My zeal consumeth me ;
Because my enemies forget thy words.
140 Thy word is exceedingly pure :
Therefore thy servant loveth it.
141 I am insignificant, and slighted ;
I do not forget thy precepts.

131. *I open my mouth, &c.*—A strong figure taken from the effects on the bodily frame, chiefly the lungs and organs of respiration, of strong and urgent desire.

140. *Thy word is exceedingly pure.*—The purity which is here ascribed to the word of God, is such as gold possesses which has been thoroughly refined, so that no alloy remains mixed with it.

- 142 Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness ;
And thy law is truth.
143 Trouble and anguish come upon me ;
Thy commandments are my delights.
144 The rectitude of thy testimonies is everlasting ;
Grant me understanding, that I may live.

KOPH.

- 145 I cry with my whole heart : hear me, O Jehovah !
I will observe thy statutes.
146 I cry unto thee : save me,
That I may observe thy testimonies.
147 I prevent the dawn of the morning, and cry ;
I hope in thy word.
148 My eyes prevent the night-watches ;
That I may contemplate thy word.
149 Hear my voice, according to thy loving-kindness :
Revive me, O Jehovah ! according to thy wonted manner.
150 They who pursue wickedness are drawing nigh :
They are far from thy law.
151 Thou, O Jehovah ! art near ;
And all thy commandments are truth.
152 I have known thy testimonies long since ;
That thou hast established them for ever.

RESH.

- 153 Consider my affliction, and rescue me :
For I do not forget thy law.
154 Plead my cause, and deliver me :
Revive me, according to thy word.
155 Safety is far from the wicked ;
For they seek not thy statutes.
156 Thy tender mercies, O Jehovah ! are great :
Revive me, according to thy wonted manner.

148. *My eyes prevent, &c.*—So intent was his spirit on devout contemplation, that he awoke before the night was ended, for that purpose.

- 157 Many are my persecutors and my enemies :
I do not decline from thy testimonies.
158 I behold transgressors, and I abhor them ;
Because they obey not thy word.
159 Consider how I love thy precepts :
Revive me, O Jehovah ! according to thy loving-kindness.
160 The sum of thy word is truth :
And all thy righteous determination is everlasting.

SCHIN.

- 161 Princes persecute me without cause :
But my heart stands in awe of thy word.
162 I rejoice at thy word,
As one that findeth great spoil.
163 I hate, I detest falsehood :
Thy law do I love.
164 Seven times a day do I praise thee,
Because of thy righteous appointments.
165 Great peace have they who love thy law ;
They shall not stumble in the way.
166 I hope, O Jehovah ! for thy salvation ;
And I observe thy commandments.
167 My soul observeth thy testimonies ;
And I love them exceedingly.
168 I observe thy precepts and thy testimonies ;
For all my ways are before thee.

TAU.

- 169 Let my cry come near, into thy presence, O Jehovah !
Grant me understanding according to thy word.
170 Let my supplication come before thee ;
Deliver me according to thy word.
171 My lips shall utter praise,
When thou hast taught me thy statutes.
172 My tongue shall speak of thy word ;
For all thy commandments are righteousness.

- 173 Let thy hand help me ;
 For I choose thy precepts.
- 174 I long for thy salvation, O Jchovah !
 And thy law is my delight.
- 175 Let my soul live, that it may praise thee ;
 And let thy appointments help me.
- 176 I have gone astray like a lost sheep :
 Seek thy servant, for I do not forget thy commandments.*

PSALM CXX.

THIS Psalm, as well as the fourteen which follow it, has an inscription, about which there is a considerable diversity of opinion. I shall notice only that which appears to me to be the most probable judgment respecting it. The title literally translated is, " A song of ascents ;" and the whole of these fifteen Psalms were, most likely, either written about the time of the return from the captivity in Babylon, or, if any of them were previously extant, were adapted to this event. They are named " Songs of ascents," because the journey from Babylon, and other districts, to which the Jews had been carried, was from a low to a higher region.

On a perusal of these Psalms, there is found a great diversity of subjects in them, occasioned probably by the times or circumstances to which they were at first applicable ; some about the commencement of the journey, and others

* Having arrived at the close of this divine poem, I shall beg permission of my readers to say, that I scarcely know how to take leave of it, without suggesting that its most distinguishing excellencies will not be duly appreciated without a portion of the devout and pious feeling which enlivens every part of it. I beg also to observe, that the great antiquity of this poem, older by many ages than any writings extant, except the preceding parts of the Bible, should be recollected, as an antidote to the distaste which may exist in some bosoms to its peculiar structure, arising from the fastidious temper which modern refinement and embellishment are apt to gene-

rate. It may possibly occur to some of the readers of this Psalm to think, that it is singularly marked by frequent repetitions, which are, in some cases, almost tautological. It is not my intention to write an essay on this theme ; and I shall therefore briefly say, that the simplicity of ancient writings is one of their greatest charms. If the repetitions of the 119th Psalm create in it a blemish, it is one which the royal author of it shares in common with the most illustrious poet of pagan antiquity ; and that if simplicity and repetition are to be objected against David's ode, the author of the Iliad and the Odyssey will hardly escape condemnation.

during its progress, or at its termination. It is also to be remarked, that the captives did not return all at one time, or in one body; which may account for some of these diversities. On the whole it seems to be likely, that these Psalms, first used in these ways, were subsequently collected, in the order in which we find them, and that, at the time of collection, the title was prefixed to each of them.

A SONG OF ASCENTS.

- 1 In my distress I call upon Jehovah,
That he may answer me :
- 2 " Deliver me, O Jehovah ! from lying lips ;
From a deceitful tongue."
- 3 What shall be given to thee ?
Or what shall be done unto thee, O false tongue !
- 4 Sharp arrows of a warrior,
And burning coals of juniper, *thou resemblest.*
- 5 Alas for me ! surely I sojourn in Mesekh ;
And dwell in the tents of Kedar.
- 6 My soul hath made a long abode
With those who hate peace.
- 7 I am for peace ; but when I speak,
They are for war.

1. *In my distress, &c.*—It is conjectured, with some probability, that the distress here meant arose from the opposition that was made by the Samaritans, and other tribes in the vicinity of Judea who were hostile to the Jews, to the rebuilding of Jerusalem and of the temple, of which there are accounts in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. These people interrupted the building by force of arms, and by calumnious insinuations, which they transmitted to the court of Persia, relative to what they falsely represented as the sinister designs of the Jews. These malevolent efforts were for a time effectual, but were at length completely frustrated. During this troubled state of affairs, the Psalm appears to have been used by the people, who, in its words, expressed their grief and anxiety which were thus occasioned.

4. *Sharp arrows, &c.*—These are figu-

rative descriptions of the painful and destructive consequences of the calumnies and falsehoods which were directed against the Jews. The false tongue is represented sharp and deadly as the arrows of war,—fiery and pernicious as the burning coals of juniper:—the heat of this fuel is said to be very great, and of long continuance. The reader is requested to observe that this is given as what seems to be the most probable interpretation of the passage, though it cannot be regarded as absolutely certain.

5. *In Mesekh.*—Mesekh and Kedar were barbarous and brutal tribes of Arabs, whose names the Psalmist employs to give effect to his representation; not as though he actually lived among these barbarians, but met with as much grief and ill-treatment as though this had been the case.

PSALM CXXI.

THIS beautiful composition is so clear as to need no elucidation, and so impressive as to find its way at once into every bosom which is imbued by correct sentiments of piety, produced by a due recollection of human weakness and of God's omnipotence. Its adaptation to the circumstances of the people of Israel is very affecting. They had to make a long and fatiguing journey, through burning and inhospitable climes, to their native soil; and they beguiled the tedium and dangers of the way by chanting this hymn of devout confidence and hope in God.

A SONG OF ASCENTS.

- 1 I LIFT up my eyes to the mountains,
Whence cometh my help.
- 2 My help is from Jehovah,
Who made heaven and earth.
- 3 He will not suffer thy foot to slip;
He who keepeth thee doth not slumber.
- 4 Lo! he who preserveth Israel
Neither slumbereth nor sleepeth.
- 5 Jehovah is thy guardian;
Jehovah is thy shade on thy right hand.
- 6 The sun smiteth thee not by day,
Nor the moon by night.
- 7 Jehovah preserveth thee from all evil:
He preserveth thy life.
- 8 Jehovah guardeth thy going out and thy coming in,
Henceforth and for ever.

1. *The mountains.*]—These were the mountains of Palestine, Sion, Tabor, Carmel, &c.—the land for so many ages honoured with God's presence, and where these restored exiles were now expecting to behold his glory.

5. *On thy right hand.*]—The image here seems to be that of a temporary contrivance, similar to a modern umbrella, which being held in the right-hand, supplied a grateful relief from the scorching rays of the sun.

6. *Nor the moon.*]—Some interpreters

think this refers to a noxious influence which was supposed to emanate from the moon, affecting persons who slept underneath its beams. Other interpretations are given; but the best account of this phraseology is, in my opinion, that it is merely a poetic embellishment,—that as the sun should be productive of no injury by day, neither should the moon by night.

It is not unlikely that this Psalm was sung in parts,—the first two verses by one company, which was responded to by another in the remaining verses.

PSALM CXXII.

It has been intimated in the introduction to Psalm cxx. that some of these Psalms of ascents, as they are denominated, might originally have been composed in former times, and were accommodated to the situation of the people who were returning from captivity. Such was probably the case with this Psalm, which bears the name of David. It is expressive of the great delight which the people anticipated from renewing the ancient worship; and it presents, in very affecting terms, the warm feelings of regard which they retained for Jerusalem, and their fervent prayers for the perpetuity of its peace and prosperity.

A SONG OF ASCENTS. OF DAVID.

- 1 I WAS glad when they said to me,
Let us go to the house of Jehovah.
- 2 Our feet shall stand within thy gates,
O Jerusalem !
- 3 Jerusalem is built as a city
That is compact together :
- 4 Whither the tribes ascend, the tribes of Jehovah ;
According to the institution of Israel ;
To give thanks to the name of Jehovah.
- 5 For there sit the tribunals of judgment ;
The tribunals of the house of David.
- 6 Pray ye for the peace of Jerusalem ;
They shall prosper who love thee.
- 7 Peace be within thy walls ;
Prosperity within thy palaces.
- 8 For my brethren and companions' sake,
I now say, Peace be within thee !
- 9 Because of the house of Jehovah, our God,
I will seek thy good.

3. *As a city that is compact.*—Jerusalem, which was fortified by strong walls, where the inhabitants lived in close contiguity and neighbourhood, is here contrasted with those towns or villages in which the dwellings were single and more apart.

4. *Whither the tribes, &c.*—This is a continued eulogy upon the city, which was rendered illustrious by the presence of the most distinguished personages, and by the public resort, at the great festivals, in compliance with the institution of the law.

PSALM CXXIII.

THIS Psalm appears to have owed its origin to the contumelious behaviour of the Samaritans, and other tribes, who expressed their hatred of the Israelites by the most insulting language and most exasperating actions. The resource which alone remained to these afflicted people, was to betake themselves to God, on whom they placed their reliance, and from whom only they could hope for effectual relief.

A SONG OF ASCENTS.

- 1 To thee do I lift my eyes,
O thou that dwellest in the heavens ! [masters ;
 - 2 Lo ! as the eyes of servants *are directed* to the hand of their
As the eye of a maiden to the hand of her mistress ;
So are our eyes upon Jehovah our God ;
Until he show mercy unto us.
 - 3 Have mercy upon us, O Jehovah ! have mercy upon us :
For we are greatly overcome by contempt.
 - 4 We are greatly overcome by the scorn of men who are at ease ;
And by the contempt of the proud.
-

PSALM CXXIV.

THE observations which have been made respecting the preceding Psalms are strictly applicable to this. It is a triumphant hymn, which celebrates the deliverance of the Israelites from overwhelming calamities, and gives grateful acknowledgments to God for his goodness, which was the source of all their consolations.

A SONG OF ASCENTS. OF DAVID.

- 1 BUT for Jehovah who was with us,
Let Israel now say ;
- 2 But for Jehovah who was with us,
When men rose up against us ;
- 3 Long ago they would have devoured us alive ;
When their anger was inflamed against us.

- 4 Long ago would the waters have inundated us ;
The torrent would have overwhelmed us.
- 5 Long ago would the proud waters have gone over us.
- 6 Blessed be Jehovah !
He hath not left us a prey to their teeth :
- 7 We have escaped, as a bird from the snare of the fowlers ;
The snare is broken, and we have escaped.
- 8 The name of Jehovah is our help,
Who made heaven and earth.

PSALM CXXV.

A HYMN of devout confidence, ascribing all safety and happiness to God, who is the unchangeable guardian of his servants, and the awful avenger of impiety and wickedness.

A SONG OF ASCENTS.

- 1 THEY who confide in Jehovah resemble Mount Zion ;
It abideth immovable for ever.
- 2 As the mountains encompass Jerusalem,
So Jehovah encompasseth his people, henceforth and for ever.
- 3 For the sceptre of the wicked resteth not on the inheritance of the
just ;
That the just may not extend their hands to iniquity.
- 4 Do good, O Jehovah ! to good men ;
Even them who are upright in their heart.
- 5 But them who decline to crooked paths,
Jehovah will destroy, with the workers of iniquity.
Let peace be upon Israel.

3. *For the sceptre, &c.*]—The sentiment of these words is, Though unrighteous men may, for a time, prolong their oppressive dominion over the servants of God, this will not be suffered to continue for ever ; as uninterrupted and incessant adversity would wear out the faith and patience, even of the best and wisest, who are but dust. A sentiment

which was illustrated by the long continuance of captivity in Babylon,—which, notwithstanding its length, issued in deliverance, and was the means of entirely subduing the propensity to idolatry in the hearts of the Israelites, which had been the source of so many sufferings both to their ancestors and themselves.

PSALM CXXVI.

THIS Psalm is a joyful commemoration of past sorrows contrasted with present delight, and ends with a sentiment which is most gratifying and alleviating to pious and patient sufferers under the pressure of their grief.

A SONG OF ASCENTS.

- 1 WHEN Jehovah brought back the captives of Zion,
We resembled them that dream. [singing :
- 2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with
Then they said among the nations,
"Jehovah hath done great things for them."
- 3 Jehovah hath done great things for us :
We rejoice.
- 4 Bring back *all* our captives, O Jehovah !
Like the streams of the south.
- 5 They who sow in tears reap in joy.
- 6 He who goeth out and weepeth, carrying seed for sowing,
Will return with rejoicing, carrying his sheaves.

PSALM CXXVII.

THE concurrence of divine power with all human exertion, to insure its beneficial effects, is the subject of this Psalm. We shall scarcely peruse it with attention without being reminded, that dependence upon God, in the

4. *All our captives.*—The word "all" is not in the Hebrew text, but is necessary to the sense, for some had returned, and others were returning or about to return.

— *Like the streams, &c.*—In the southern districts of Palestine and Arabia, the heat is so vehement during some seasons as to dry up the rivers completely, and parch the soil. When rains come, the torrents again flow, and the

soil is refreshed and verdant;—a delightful image of the joy experienced by captives on returning to their native lands.

5, 6. *They who sow in tears, &c.*—It is the decision of divine wisdom that sorrow shall precede joy. For this decision there may be more reasons than we are acquainted with, as we shall admit, when we recollect "that the Captain of our Salvation was made perfect through suffering."

absence of our own strenuous efforts, is wretched enthusiasm and presumption ; but that to rely upon our powers and exertions with a disregard of divine agency, is atheism. They only have a right to expect true success, who, with the diligent exercise of their own faculties, combine such an unremitting dependence upon divine power and goodness, as is the genuine product of believing that God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

A SONG OF ASCENTS. OF SOLOMON.

- 1 EXCEPT Jehovah build the house, the builders labour in vain :
Except Jehovah guard the city, the watchman waketh in vain.
- 2 To rise early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of toil is vain :
He, truly, granteth sleep to his beloved.
- 3 Lo ! children are an inheritance from Jehovah ;
The fruit of the womb, a reward :
- 4 As arrows in the hand of a warrior,
Such are children of the youth.
- 5 Happy is the man whose quiver is full of them ; [gate.
They will not be confounded when they speak with enemies in the

PSALM CXXVIII.

THE happiness of the conjugal state, when it is founded upon the fear and love of God, is beautifully depicted in this Psalm. Its appropriateness to the condition of the Israelites, after the return from captivity, when they were few in number, and consequently feeble in public energy, is made apparent by considering, that a rapid and great increase of population was one of the benefits which God promised to confer upon his people under such circumstances. See Jer. xxx. 19 : " I will multiply them, and they shall not be few : I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small."

2. *To rise early, &c.*—The sense of this verse is somewhat obscure, from the brevity with which it is expressed ; but we must understand the vanity of these exertions to consist, in their being undertaken without a due regard to the divine blessing, which alone can render labour successful. The latter clause of the verse is enfeebled by the word " so,"

in the Vulg. Trans. It most likely means "in truth,"—*i. e.* truly ; and the sense will be, though all exertion is vain without God, yet he truly bestows refreshing sleep, free from anxiety and excessive exertion, upon those who are the objects of his love, inasmuch as they combine all their endeavours with due regard to him.

A SONG OF ASCENTS.

- 1 BLESSED is every one who feareth Jehovah !
Who walketh in his ways :
- 2 For thou eatest of the fruit of thy labour ;
Happy art thou ! and well is it with thee !
- 3 Thy wife as a fruitful vine by the sides of thy house ;
Thy children as olive-plants around thy table.
- 4 Lo ! thus blessed is the man who feareth Jehovah.
- 5 Jehovah will bless thee from Zion :
He will cause thee to behold the prosperity of Jerusalem,
All the days of thy life ;
- 6 And to see thy children's children.
Let peace be upon Israel !

PSALM CXXIX.

THE consolation of the people of Israel, under the discouraging circumstances in which they were placed upon their return from captivity, was the evident purpose for which this Psalm was written. With this view it alludes to the many sufferings which their ancestors had undergone, from the earliest period of their history ; yet, as God had preserved them from entire destruction, they had encouragement still to hope that he would be their guardian amidst all the malevolence and hostility by which their present condition was accompanied.

A SONG OF ASCENTS.

- 1 FROM my youth men have greatly afflicted me,
May Israel now say :
- 2 From my youth they have greatly afflicted me ;
But they have not prevailed over me.
- 3 Ploughmen have ploughed upon my back ;
They have made long furrows.
- 4 Jehovah is righteous ;
He hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked.

PSALM CXXIX.

3. *Ploughmen.*]—The persecutors of Israel are compared to ploughmen ; because, as they cut up, and as it were torture the surface of the earth, so did the

adversaries greatly and grievously distress these afflicted people.

4. *The cords of the wicked.*]—The imagery of the preceding verse is continued. The cords are those by which the oxen,

- 5 Let all who hate Zion
Be confounded and turned backward.
- 6 Let them be as the grass of the house-top,
Which withereth before it is plucked up :
- 7 With which the mower filleth not his hand ;
Nor he who bindeth sheaves, his bosom.
- 8 Neither do they who pass by say,
The blessing of Jehovah be upon you !
We bless you in the name of Jehovah.

PSALM CXXX.

THE tenor of this Psalm directs us to conclude, that it was designed for a season of public humiliation, when the people of Israel assembled to express their penitent and lowly sentiments of themselves, to deprecate the divine displeasure, and to implore forgiveness, that iniquity might not prove their ruin. The divine promises afforded them ample encouragement to present such services to God; and the earnestness which marks the character of the Psalm, while it would produce a kindred feeling in the bosoms of the truly pious worshippers, would rebuke the cold hypocrisy of others, who united in such a service from a mere compliance with forms, the propriety of which they could not call in question.

It is worthy of observation, that in the supplications which are here presented for forgiveness, no reference is made to any other reason why it should be granted but the divine benignity. Here are acknowledgments of transgression made by persons who say, they have no claim on the great object of their worship, but that they can no more abide his scrutiny into their conduct and character than even the greatest sinners among men; they confess that, in this respect, all stand upon a level. They do not advert to any personal reasons why pardon should be extended to them; their sole plea is, "there is

used in ploughing, were attached to the plough. These were cut; and God thus manifested his righteous distribution by incapacitating the enemies of his people from continuing their inhuman proceedings.

6. *Grass of the house-top.*]—A very expressive figure. This spontaneous produce was of no value, and was plucked up as a nuisance; but in many cases, before this took place, it withered away by its own want of vigour to resist the heat of the sun. So, says the Psalmist,

let them be who hate Zion—worthless and vile they are in themselves—and let them be treated according to their character. The worthlessness of these persons is further augmented by the representation of no congratulations taking place between those who were employed to remove the useless produce, and the passers-by,—as was the case in harvest, when it was customary to use the praises and pleasing words with which the Psalm concludes,—“We bless you in the name of Jehovah.”

forgiveness with thee." From this and similar portions of Scripture it has been strenuously maintained, that the fact of an atoning sacrifice is no part of the communications made by the Scriptures respecting the mode in which men are instructed to seek for the forgiveness of iniquity. God, it is said, is exhibited in the most amiable light, as needing no inducement to obliterate human guilt but what results from the benignity of his own nature.

I shall beg to observe to my readers, that if, on any occasion, they feel an inclination to coincide with such remarks, this short Psalm was not intended to deliver a complete system of Jewish theology. We cannot doubt that the persons who with sincerity and uprightness used this Psalm, were diligent observers of the institutions of their own law, delivered to them by Moses; or, that they lived in the habit of presenting the burnt-offerings, and other offerings which were prescribed by the law. Whatever might, therefore, be the case with the multitudes, who were satisfied with the forms without the spirit of religion, it is certain, that worshippers of a different class passed through the signs to the things that were signified; and who, while they presented the sacrifices of bullocks and of goats, &c. felt that the most holy God had no pleasure in such offerings, further than as they were presented in obedience to his institutions and with reliance upon his mercy, which they were instructed to combine with the hope of a Saviour, the divine Messiah, for whom they looked, who was "to make an end of sin, and to bring in everlasting righteousness." Let it not then be supposed that men, in any age, were accepted and forgiven without reference to an atoning sacrifice; neither let it be said, that this diminishes our estimation of the divine benignity: it does no such thing; it represents the rectitude of the divine government, which would dispense forgiveness only by means which were in unison with divine wisdom; and so far from having a tendency to diminish the divine mercy, it is the one circumstance, above all others, that augments and magnifies it to an extent surpassing human comprehension. Let any one of sound mind, and freedom from preconceived notions, contemplate "the unspeakable gift," through which the Son of God was made, by his Father, a sacrifice of atonement, in order that mercy might triumph in the full forgiveness of the greatest guilt; and then let him calculate to what extent the mercy of God is diminished by being exercised in unison with a propitiating High Priest and redeeming Saviour.

A SONG OF ASCENTS.

- 1 FROM out of the depths do I call upon thee, O Jehovah!
- 2 O Lord, hear my voice:
Let thy ears attend to the sound of my supplications.
- 3 Shouldst thou, O Jehovah, mark iniquities,
O Lord! who can abide?

1. *The depths.*—i.e. Deep waters, the standing symbol for all kinds of extreme affliction and distress.

3. *Who can abide?*—The interrogation implies, in the strongest form, that none of the sons of men are able to

- 4 But forgiveness is with thee,
That thou mayest be feared.
- 5 I wait for Jehovah, my soul waiteth ;
And for the fulfilment of his word do I look.
- 6 My soul looketh for the Lord,
More intensely than they who watch for the morning :
Than they who watch for the morning.
- 7 Let Israel confide in Jehovah ;
For with Jehovah is mercy,
And with him is plenteous redemption.
- 8 Therefore He will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

PSALM CXXXI.

WE may ascribe the composition of this Psalm to David, in agreement with the title. It describes the lowly sentiments of his heart, and his freedom from pride and ambition ; vices with which his enemies reproached him during the time of his sufferings from the jealousy and cruelty of Saul. It is also quite appropriate to the circumstances of the people who returned from captivity, and who applied it to their own situation, as expressing their meek acquiescence in the afflictive condition to which God had been pleased to reduce them : furnishing an instructive example of the quietness of mind with which it becomes us to conduct ourselves in relation to all the divine dispensations.

A SONG OF ASCENTS. OF DAVID.

- 1 O JEHOVAH ! my heart is not haughty, nor my eyes lofty :
I do not meddle with things that are great, or high above me.

clear themselves from the charge of violating the laws which God has given. All are alike under sin.

4. *That thou mayest be feared.*—Had God given no intimations of his merciful design to forgive iniquity, there could have been no ground on which men might approach to him with hopes of acceptance, and the consciousness of guilt must have kept them for ever at a distance from him.

6. *Who watch for the morning.*—This is frequently supposed to be a reference

to the conduct of the Levites, who kept watch in the temple for the dawn, in order that the morning sacrifice might be duly offered. This may be correct, but there are many other cases in which men long earnestly for the light of day, and I see no reason why the reference should be supposed exclusively to relate to the case of the Levites.

PSALM CXXXI.

1. *Things that are great.*—He was not restless and dissatisfied with his humble lot, and appeals to God, the searcher of

- 2 I indeed subdue and still myself,
 Like a weaned child towards its mother;
 Like a weaned child is my soul.
- 3 Let Israel hope in Jehovah!
 Hencforth and for ever.

PSALM CXXXII.

WE may conclude, from the contents of this Psalm, that it was written for the grand and solemn services which were celebrated at the dedication of Solomon's temple. In 1 Kings viii. 25, words nearly similar to vv. 11, 12, of this Psalm are found, in the prayer which Solomon delivered on that occasion. We have no means of determining whether the Psalm was written by Solomon himself, or by some inspired person of his time. It consists of a recital of David's solemn vows to build a temple to Jehovah,—a design which, however, he was not permitted to effect, though he was assured that his intention was pleasing to God, and that his son should enjoy the honour of erecting a sanctuary for the abode of the ark. There then follow references to the divine promises which were made to David, and to the various distinguished blessings with which God had engaged to honour his priests and the worshippers in general at his temple. Such appears to have been the origin of this sacred and beautiful hymn, which was, in a subsequent age, very happily appropriated to the service of the temple, which was erected in place of Solomon's magnificent edifice.

A SONG OF ASCENTS.

- 1 REMEMBER David, O Jehovah!
 And all his troubles:
- 2 Who swore unto Jehovah,
 And vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob:
- 3 "Verily, I will not enter the tents of my house;
 "Neither will I ascend to my bed;

hearts, that no pride, ambition, or selfish purposes actuated his bosom, or employed his thoughts.

2. *Like a weaned child.*—A striking image! drawn from an infant, which, though deprived of its greatest enjoyment, yet clings to the bosom of its mother with unabated affection and submission. "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth." Matt. v. 5.

PSALM CXXXII.

3. *The tents of my house.*—This is the record of a very solemn oath and vow of David, which must not be interpreted literally. His meaning was, that he would direct his attention solely and incessantly to this important object. We have similar language in Prov. vi. 4, which is to be understood with a similar limitation.

- 4 "I will not give sleep to my eyes;
"Or slumber to my eye-lids;
- 5 "Until I have found a place for Jehovah;
"A habitation for the Mighty One of Jacob."
- 6 Lo! we heard of it at Ephratah;
We found it in the fields of Jaar.
- 7 Let us enter into his tabernacle;
Let us worship at his footstool.
- 8 Arise, O Jehovah! to thy resting-place:
Thou, and the ark of thy strength.
- 9 Let thy priests be clothed with sanctity;
And let thy worshippers shout for joy.
- 10 For thy servant David's sake,
Turn not away the face of thy anointed.
- 11 Jehovah swear in truth unto David: He will not recede from it:
"Of the offspring of thy body will I place one upon thy throne.
- 12 "If thy children observe my covenant,
"And my testimony, which I teach them,
"Their children also shall sit on thy throne for evermore.
- 13 "For Jehovah hath chosen Zion:
"He desired it for his abode.
- 14 "This is my resting-place for ever;
"Here will I dwell, for I desire it.
- 15 "I will abundantly bless her provision:
"I will satisfy her poor with bread.
- 16 "I will also clothe her priests with salvation;
"And her worshippers shall shout aloud for joy.
- 17 "There will I make the horn of David to flourish;
"I will prepare a lamp for my anointed.
- 18 "His enemies will I clothe with shame;
"But upon himself shall his crown glitter."

5. *A habitation.*—i. e. A resting-place for the ark, the symbol of God's presence, which had been kept in different places, and had been captured by the Philistines. 1 Sam. iv. 11.

6. *We heard of it at Ephratah, &c.*—The thing which is said to be heard of is

the ark. The passage is very obscure and very much contested. I shall transfer to Additional Note the observations which I have to offer respecting it.

10. *Thy anointed.*—*scil.* Solomon.

17. *A lamp.*—An image for distinguished glory and honour.

PSALM CXXXIII.

THIS short but exquisite Psalm was probably written by David soon after his deliverance from the disquietudes and dangers to which Saul's enmity had subjected him, and he was partaking of the sweets of peace and friendship.

The subject rendered it peculiarly suitable to the situation of the restored captives, who, being comparatively few in number, had the greater reason to cultivate the sentiments of love and amity.

A SONG OF ASCENTS. OF DAVID.

- 1 BEHOLD ! how good and how pleasant,
Is the dwelling of brethren together in unity.
- 2 It resembles the fragrant ointment on the head,
Which descended on the beard, the beard of Aaron,
And went down to the extremity of his garments.
- 3 It is like the dew of Hermon, *and that* which cometh down
Upon the mountains of Zion, where Jehovah hath commanded the
blessing ;
Life for evermore.

PSALM CXXXIV.

A SOLEMN exhortation, addressed to the priests and Levites, constitutes the subject of this Psalm ; the design of which was, to excite them to the discharge

2. *Fragrant ointment.*—This was not an ordinary perfume, but an unguent, composed of the choicest ingredients, which not merely affected the surface of the hair and the garments, but, by its liquid and penetrating qualities, diffused itself over the whole person. A most expressive image of that strong, sincere, and virtuous attachment, which is not less conducive to the usefulness than to the delight of life.

3. *The dew of Hermon.*—Hermon was a lofty range of mountains, at least thirty miles distant from Zion ; which creates some difficulty in this passage, as the literal version is, "The dew of Hermon

which descendeth upon the mountains of Zion." It becomes necessary, therefore, to make an insertion, as the English Translation does ; since we can form no notion of the dew of Hermon falling upon other mountains at so great a distance. The application of the figure results from the fruitfulness which is produced by abundant dews in hot climates :—so friendship, love, and unity, are productive of the happiest effects on human society.

— *The blessing ; life for evermore.*—Zion was the centre of true religion and piety, upon the basis of which genuine love and friendship can alone be founded.

of their sacred functions with feelings and temper in unison with them. It was probably used about the time of offering the continual evening sacrifice; and the first two verses were sung by one company, to which another responded in the words of the third.

A SONG OF ASCENTS.

- 1 COME ye ! all ye servants of Jehovah,
Who abide by night in the house of Jehovah;
Bless ye Jehovah.
 - 2 Lift up your hands in the sanctuary;
And bless ye Jehovah.
 - 3 May Jehovah, who made heaven and earth,
Bless thee from out of Zion !
-

PSALM CXXXV.

WE have now before us a song of praise to God, and, in the perusal of it, we may call to our remembrance, that it has been in the hands of millions of our pious predecessors, and has employed their minds and voices during the more than two thousand years in which it has formed a part of the sacred bequest that has been left us by inspired poets, prophets, and saints, who are now elevated to a higher region of praise; and by whom we shall, ere long, be welcomed into their immortal abodes, if the spirit which animated their bosoms has entered into our hearts. The topics of the Psalm are drawn from the essential excellency of God's character, the uncontrollable sovereignty of his government, his creative power, and the works of mercy and grace which he has performed for the welfare and happiness of his servants. In the call which the divine Psalmist makes on his brethren and compatriots to offer their incessant praises to the Most High, he assures them that it is a pleasing and delightful employment. This is a sentiment many times expressed in the Book of Psalms, and it is altogether in unison with the testimony of the pious and holy of all regions and times.

The engagement is becoming the highest exercise of human thought and intelligence, and supplies us with our best notions of the occupations of natures more exalted and blessed than our own; while it becomes a source of the purest satisfaction to know, that it is an employment of mind most pleasing and acceptable to the great Being to whom it is presented. It is indeed the consummation of religion, and the accomplishment of its most perfect work; the joint production of knowledge, love, and sanctity; the foretaste of heavenly bliss; and will constitute the noblest exercise of intellectual energy in the

mansions of immortality. A propensity of heart to this engagement, and a fitness for it, is the impress of heaven, the seal of the divine Spirit, and the pledge of future, imperishable, and eternal joy.

We know not on what occasion this Psalm was composed; but the probable opinion is, that it belongs to the class of hymns that were written for the use of the people of Israel, soon after their return from captivity.

- 1 PRAISE ye Jehovah ! praise ye the name of Jehovah !
Give praise, ye servants of Jehovah !
- 2 Ye who stand in the house of Jehovah,
In the courts of the house of our God,
- 3 Praise ye Jehovah ! for Jehovah is good :
Sing praise to his name, for it is pleasant.
- 4 For Jehovah hath chosen Jacob for himself ;
Israel for his peculiar possession.
- 5 I know surely that Jehovah is great ;
Even our Lord, above all gods.
- 6 Whatever Jehovah pleaseth, he performeth,
In heaven and in earth, in the seas, and all deep waters.
- 7 He causeth clouds to arise from all parts of the earth :
He produceth lightnings with rain :
He bringeth forth winds from his treasures.
- 8 He smote the first-born of Egypt,
Both of man and of beast.
- 9 He sent miracles and prodigies into the midst of Egypt ;
Upon Pharaoh, and upon his servants.
- 10 He smote great nations,
And slew mighty kings :
- 11 Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan,
And all the kingdoms of Canaan :
- 12 And he gave their land to be an inheritance,
An inheritance to Israel his people.
- 13 Thy name, O Jehovah ! is everlasting ;
Thy memorial, O Jehovah ! through all ages.
- 14 Surely Jehovah will decide the cause of his people ;
And towards his servants will he exercise compassion.
- 15 The idols of the nations are silver and gold ;
The work of men's hands.

- 16 They have mouths, but speak not ;
 They have eyes, but see not ;
 17 They have ears, but hear not ;
 Noses, but there is no breath in their mouths.
 18 They who make them are like unto them ;
 As is every one that confideth in them.
 19 Bless ye Jehovah ! O house of Israel !
 Bless ye Jehovah ! O house of Aaron !
 20 Bless ye Jehovah ! O house of Levi !
 Ye who fear Jehovah, bless Jehovah !
 21 Blessed be Jehovah ! from out of Zion ;
 Who inhabiteth Jerusalem. Hallelujah.

PSALM CXXXVI.

THIS Psalm is so similar in object to that of the immediately preceding Psalm, that the introductory remarks which are prefixed to that may with propriety be transferred to this. It is of the same class, and was most likely written about the same time.

- 1 GIVE ye thanks unto Jehovah, for he is good :
 For his mercy is everlasting.
 2 Give ye thanks unto the God of gods !
 For his mercy is everlasting.
 3 Give ye thanks to the Lord of lords !
 For his mercy is everlasting.

1. *For his mercy is everlasting.*—It is highly probable that the peculiar structure of this psalm was given to it, that it might be sung in parts;—the first line of each verse by the Priests and Levites, and the second, which constitutes the *επιφωνημα*, or burden of the song, by the assembled multitudes. It thus furnishes the most remarkable instance of a responsive service in the holy Scriptures; and it probably gave occasion to the composition known, in the Book of Common Prayer,

by the name of "the Litany." I have before observed that this Psalm was probably written soon after the return of the captives from Babylon. In addition to which, I would remark the very great likelihood there is, that this is the identical song, of which we have an account in the Book of Ezra. (Ezra iii. 11), "They sang together by course, in praising and giving thanks to the Lord, because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever."

- 4 Who alone performeth great and admirable works :
For his mercy is everlasting.
- 5 Who by wisdom made the heavens :
For his mercy is everlasting.
- 6 Who extended the earth above the waters :
For his mercy is everlasting.
- 7 Who made the great luminaries :
For his mercy is everlasting :
- 8 The sun to rule by day :
For his mercy is everlasting :
- 9 The moon and the stars to rule by night :
For his mercy is everlasting.
- 10 Who smote the first-born of Egypt :
For his mercy is everlasting.
- 11 And brought forth Israel from among them :
For his mercy is everlasting :
- 12 With a mighty hand and an outstretched arm :
For his mercy is everlasting.
- 13 Who divided the Red Sea into parts :
For his mercy is everlasting :
- 14 And led Israel through the midst of it :
For his mercy is everlasting.
- 15 But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea :
For his mercy is everlasting.
- 16 Who conducted his people through the wilderness :
For his mercy is everlasting.
- 17 Who smote great kings :
For his mercy is everlasting :
- 18 And slew illustrious kings :
For his mercy is everlasting :
- 19 Sihon, king of the Amorites :
For his mercy is everlasting :
- 20 And Og, King of Bashan :
For his mercy is everlasting :
- 21 And gave their land to be an inheritance :
For his mercy is everlasting :

- 22 An inheritance for Israel his servant :
For his mercy is everlasting.
- 23 Who remembered us in our low condition :
For his mercy is everlasting.
- 24 And redeemed us from our enemies :
For his mercy is everlasting.
- 25 Who giveth food to all creatures :
For his mercy is everlasting.
- 26 Give ye thanks unto the God of heaven !
For his mercy is everlasting.
-

PSALM CXXXVII.

THIS pathetic Psalm was written by some one of the pious captives who had returned to their native land, after the seventy years of captivity in Babylon. He records the feelings of his own bosom, and of those of numbers of his pious countrymen, who had sympathized with him during their long and irksome continuance in bondage, and had cherished through it the strong sentiments of affection which are here described towards the land of their fathers. Their country was endeared to these exiles by all the feelings of common attachment, heightened by the sacred recollections which were associated with it. The sepulchres of their fathers, the memorials of divine communications scattered over every part of their land, and the desolate condition of their metropolis and temple, diffused through their hearts the most poignant regrets; while the atrocities that had been inflicted on them by their ruthless victors, conspiring with the pangs of "hope long delayed," all naturally led to the emotion so beautifully expressed, "How can we sing a song of Jehovah in a foreign land!"

- 1 By the rivers of Babylon we sat ;
And we wept, when we remembered Zion.
- 2 We hung our harps upon the willows,
Which were near to us :
- 3 For there, they who made us captives, required from us a song ;
Even they who had brought us away,—mirth :
"Sing to us a song of Zion."
- 4 How can we sing a song of Jehovah,
In a foreign land !

1. *By the rivers of Babylon.*]—Not merely the city of Babylon, but the district so called.

- 5 If I forget thee, O Jerusalem !
 Let my right hand forget *its skill* !
- 6 If I do not remember thee,
 Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth :
 If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy. [Jerusalem :
- 7 Remember, O Jehovah ! the children of Edom, in the day of
 They said, “ Raze it, raze it to its foundation ! ”
- 8 O daughter of Babylon ! doomed to be destroyed !
 Happy he ! who shall recompense thee
 With the treatment with which thou hast treated us.
- 9 Happy he ! who shall seize thy infants,
 And dash them against the rock.

PSALM CXXXVIII.

THE title of this Psalm ascribes it to David, and nothing appears in it which is at variance with this ascription. It appears to have been written soon after some signal interference of divine power in behalf of David, which enabled him to overcome the exertions of his enemies: but whether it relates to his being freed from the dangers to which he had been subjected during the life of Saul, or to his escape from the peril of Absalom's rebellion, cannot be determined. Each of these periods has been thought to be the occasion of the Psalm; but it seems to me rather to relate to some great victory with which David was favoured over the kings of the surrounding nations, with whom he was frequently compelled to fight, by their combinations against him.

The Psalm commences with the expression of a fixed purpose, in the bosom of the writer, to celebrate the praises of God, and to engage in acts of solemn adoration, on account of the great benefits which he had experienced from the truth and faithfulness with which God had accomplished the promises that had been given to him. It then proceeds to declare, that the influence of the aid which had been afforded to David and his people would be very great on the minds of the neighbouring princes and monarchs, who would be induced by it to acknowledge the superiority of the God of Israel over all the vain idols of the nations. The Psalm is concluded by a declaration of God's great condescension, and by expressions, on the part of the author, of his firm belief, that

7. *The children of Edom.*] — These were the most rancorous of the enemies of Israel, who triumphed in the desolation and misery which were inflicted upon a people, who sprang from Isaac and Abraham, their common ancestors. The

prophet Ezekiel delivered a prediction of most fearful import against these people, for their savage behaviour towards the suffering Israelites. Ezek. xxv. 12—14.

8. *Daughter of Babylon.*] — *scil.* Babylon itself.

God would superintend all his affairs, so as to make all things work together for his good.

OF DAVID.

- 1 I WILL praise thee with my whole heart :
Before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.
- 2 I will bow myself down at thy holy temple ;
And praise thy name, for thy loving-kindness, and for thy truth :
For thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.
- 3 In the day when I called upon thee thou didst answer me :
Thou didst make me courageous, with strength in my soul.
- 4 All the kings of the earth will praise thee, O Jehovah !
When they shall hear of the words of thy mouth.
- 5 They will even sing of the ways of Jehovah :
For great is the glory of Jehovah.
- 6 Jehovah, indeed, is high, yet he regardeth the low ;
But the proud he knoweth afar off.
- 7 When I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me ;
Thou wilt stretch forth thy hand against the wrath of my enemies ;
And thy right hand will deliver me.
- 8 Jehovah will effectually work for me.
Thy mercy, O Jehovah ! is everlasting :
Forsake not the work of thy hands.

PSALM CXXXIX.

WE cannot hesitate to regard the Psalm, to which our attention is now directed, as a composition of David, during the harassing and afflictive period

1. *Before the gods.*] — Doubts are raised respecting the sense of " gods " in this place. There appears to me to be little reason for this, as it is sufficiently clear that the idols, which the neighbouring kings and nations adored, are intended.

2. *Thou hast magnified.*] — By God's name is intended the whole of his character; but in the favours that had been shown to David, God had made a more express display of his truth

and faithfulness than of any other perfection.

4. *All the kings.*] — *scil.* Those over whom he had prevailed, and others more distant, to whom the report of his victories would be conveyed.

6. *The proud he knoweth afar off.*] — He condescends not to draw nigh to the haughty and arrogant, but takes cognizance of their behaviour, so as to mark it with his displeasure by continuing at a distance from them.

in which he suffered so many extremities from the injustice of Saul, and his unprincipled associates. We have had occasion to notice, several times, the unjust attacks which were made upon David's character, and the crimes which were falsely alleged against him.* Some instances of this nature were manifestly the occasion of his writing this Psalm, in which he appeals from the censures of men to the judgment of God. In the first part of this admirable and sublime composition, he delivers a most impressive representation of the omniscience of God. He then describes, in the loftiest terms, his omnipresence; and draws a powerful illustration of these divine attributes from the formation of man, and his entire subjection to the designs of infinite wisdom. He next intimates the assiduous meditation which he habitually practised upon these important and interesting themes; and after expressing his intense aversion to men, who by their unrighteous conduct showed themselves to be the enemies alike of God and man, he concludes with a solemn supplication, that God would investigate his character, and support him against the murderous intentions of his adversaries.

We can hardly conceive it to be possible for any persons, who peruse this Psalm, to be unaffected by the majestic terms in which the perfection and glory of God are presented to our thoughts by it: but while we admire its noble simplicity, and are, in some degree, awed by the transcendent character of the great Being which is delineated in it, let it be remembered that transient emotions of this nature will prove worse than useless, unless we are taught to acquire the habit of incessant meditation upon it, and the immoveable belief, that we are ever under the inspection, and subject to the will of the immense and incomprehensible Deity, who has thus disclosed himself to our view, and requires from us the practical improvement which is the great end of the discovery.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 O JEHOVAH; thou searchest and knowest me.
- 2 Thou knowest my sitting down and my rising up;
Thou understandest my thought afar off.
- 3 Thou accurately knowest my going and my resting;
And thou perceivest all my ways.
- 4 There is not indeed a word upon my tongue,
With which, O Jehovah! thou art not thoroughly acquainted.
- 5 Thou dost encompass me behind and before;
And layest thy hand upon me.
- 6 Wonderful knowledge! it is above me:
It is high; I cannot comprehend it.
- 7 Whither shall I go from thy spirit?
Whither shall I fly from thy presence?

- 8 If I ascend to heaven, thou art there ;
 If I prepare my bed in Hades, lo ! thou *art there*.
 9 Should I take the wings of the morning,
 And make my abode at the extremity of the ocean,
 10 Even there would thy hand lead me ;
 And thy right hand would hold me.
 11 If I say, Surely darkness will conceal me,
 Even night is light around me.
 12 Darkness itself concealeth nothing from thee ;
 But the night shineth as the day ;
 Darkness and light are alike.
 13 For thou didst form my reins ;
 Thou didst cover me in my mother's womb.
 14 I will praise thee, for I am admirably made :
 Wonderful are thy works ! as my soul well knoweth.
 15 My bones were not hidden from thee :
 When I was made in secret,
 I was curiously fashioned in the recesses of the earth.
 16 Thy eyes beheld me in embryo ;
 And in thy book all my days were inscribed ;
 They were delineated, while none of them existed.
 17 How precious, therefore, are thy thoughts to me, O God !
 How great is the sum of them !
 18 Should I enumerate them, they exceed the sand :
 When I awake I am still intent upon thee.

9. *Should I take the wings of the morning.*—The dawn appears in the east, and is soon followed by the rising sun ; so that the light traverses, as if on swift wings, the vast distance between the east and west in a few hours. The meaning of this beautiful allusion is, therefore, " Could I fly with the rapidity of light, and withdraw myself as far as the west is from the east, I should still be encompassed by thy power, and altogether subject to thy notice and control."

13. *My reins.*—The kidneys, used for the interior parts of the organs of the body.

13. *Thou didst cover me.*—Not merely concealment is thus expressed, but the gradual increase of the fetus, by the constant accretion of fresh materials, derived from the mother. This verse, with what immediately follows, is introduced as an illustration of God's omniscience, and his perfect cognizance of the most secret operations of nature, *i. e.* the operations of his own energy and will.

15. *The recesses of the earth.*—*scil.* The maternal womb. The figure is derived from the darkness and obscurity of caverns, and other recesses of the earth.

- 19 Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God !
 Depart from me, therefore, ye men of blood.
- 20 For they wickedly rebel against thee :
 They seduce thy cities to iniquity.
- 21 Do not I hate them, O Jehovah ! who hate thee ?
 And do not I abhor them who oppose thee ?
- 22 I hate them with perfect hatred :
 They are enemies to me.!
- 23 Search me, O God ! and know my heart :
 Examine me, and know my thoughts :
- 24 And see if there be any evil way within me :
 And lead me in the way everlasting.
-

PSALM CXL.

THE subject of this Psalm resembles those of many others, as it relates to the cruel injustice of Saul towards David, and to the false accusations and destructive attempts of his impious abettors to blast the reputation, and endanger the life, of this unoffending man. We cannot fix on any time, or special instance, in relation to which the Psalm was written, and all that is needful to be said respecting it is, that it is expressive of the same dependance upon divine protection, and of the faith and hope in God, which this distinguished servant of God habitually displayed.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 DELIVER me, O Jehovah ! from evil men ;
 Preserve me from men of violence :
- 2 Who contrive mischiefs in their heart :
 Continually do they stir up war.
- 3 They sharpen their tongue like a serpent ;
 The venom of asps is under their lips. SELAH.

20. *They seduce thy cities.*] — These enemies of God tempted and allured their countrymen, who inhabited the cities and towns of Israel, to the practice of vanity, *i. e.* of iniquity.

24. *The way everlasting.*]—He had just spoken of “ a wicked way,” the way in

which wicked men go ; and he contrasts with it, “ the way everlasting,” the way of good men, which was from the beginning made known, and in which Abrahams, and Isaac, and Jacob had walked. The old path, which conducts to peace and safety.

- 4 Keep me, O Jehovah ! from the hands of the wicked :
Preserve me from violent men, who think to upset my steps.
- 5 The proud hide a snare for me, and cords :
They spread a net by the way side :
They set traps for me. SELAH.
- 6 I say to Jehovah, Thou art my God !
Hear the voice of my supplications, O Jehovah !
- 7 O Jehovah Lord ! the strength of my salvation ;
Thou coverest my head in the day of battle.
- 8 Grant not, O Jehovah ! the desires of the wicked :
Permit them not to gain their purpose ;
Lest they should be exalted. SELAH.
- 9 As for the head of them who encompass me,
Let the mischief of their lips cover it.
- 10 Let burning coals fall upon them, let them be cast into the fire ;
Into deep abysses, that they may not arise.
- 11 Let not a calumniator be established in the earth :
Let calamity hunt a violent man to hasty flight.
- 12 I know that Jehovah will manage the cause of the afflicted ;
The pleading of the destitute.
- 13 Surely the righteous will praise thy name :
The upright will dwell in thy presence.

PSALM CXLI.

THE occasion on which this Psalm was written is clearly indicated by the sixth verse of it. This verse contains so express a reference to a very remarkable occurrence in David's history, that we cannot hesitate to admit it. The occurrence was as follows : Saul, accompanied by three thousand chosen men, was occupied in pursuit of David, in the wilderness of En-gedi, when he and his troops went into a cavern to sleep, in such a situation that David might with great ease have terminated his own sufferings, and the life of Saul, had he thought proper so to do. He, however, contented himself with making his own escape ; and, when he had removed to some distance, he addressed a most respectful remonstrance to Saul, respecting the injustice of his conduct towards him. The whole narrative, which may be found in 1 Sam. xxiv., is in the highest degree interesting, and affords a most delightful instance of David's great humanity, generosity, and piety. After this event had taken place he

committed it to writing, as a memorial of his own conduct, and an instance of the incessant watchfulness of God's providence over him: while he embraces the opportunity of addressing his fervent supplications to his great Deliverer, that he might still continue to enjoy his protection.

A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 O JEHOVAH ! I call upon thee, make haste to me :
Hearken to my voice when I cry to thee.
- 2 Let my prayer arise before thee as incense :
The elevation of my hands as the evening sacrifice.
- 3 Place a guard, O Jehovah ! over my mouth :
Keep the door of my lips.
- 4 Suffer not my heart to incline to an evil thing ;
To perform deeds of wickedness, with men who do iniquity ;
And let me not eat of their dainties.
- 5 Let a righteous man reprove me, it will be a kindness :
Let him rebuke me, it will be an unguent for my head ;
My head will not reject it, if repeated :
But my prayer is against their crimes.
- 6 Their chiefs were dismissed near the rock :
And they heard my words, which were bland.
- 7 Our bones are scattered at the mouth of the grave ;
As when a man cleaveth and cutteth the earth.

3. *Place a guard, &c.*—He thus prays that he may be preserved from using language, in reference to his blood-thirsty enemies, such as the injuries which he suffered might have prompted.

4. *Their dainties.*—The enemies of David were sensual and luxurious; and they would have gladly admitted him to share in their banquets, if his character had resembled their own. He intreats to be preserved from inducement so to do.

5. *Let a righteous man reprove me, &c.*—This verse represents David as expressing his wish, rather to be reproved and reprehended by good men, than to be the object of the flattering and deceitful commendations of such men as his adversaries were. The former would be in-

structive, and prove agreeable as precious ointment for the head; the latter injurious and detrimental to his real welfare. The last clause of the verse, "But my prayer is against their crimes," refers to the crimes of his enemies, and to the evils of which they were productive to him; which induced him to deprecate them.

6. *Their chiefs.*—*scil.* Saul and his attendants, whom he suffered to depart unhurt, and to whom he addressed the mildest expostulations.

7. *Our bones, &c.*—These words present a strong contrast between David's treatment of his enemies and that which they adopted towards him, and those who were associated with him. We are not sufficiently informed respecting the cruelties which were perpetrated against David

- 8 But my eyes are unto thee, O Jehovah Lord !
 In thee is my trust, leave me not desolate.
 9 Preserve me from the snare which they lay for me :
 From the toils of the workers of iniquity.
 10 Let the wicked fall into their own nets together :
 As for me, I shall yet escape.
-

PSALM CXLII.

THE title of this Psalm is in perfect consistency with its contents. David's condition was, at the time of writing it, most perilous and distressing. Pursued with savage rancour and hate by Saul, who had at his command the whole force of the kingdom of Israel, he was shut up in a cavern, and in imminent danger of being taken by his enraged and merciless adversary. In this desperate state he betakes himself to God, as his sole defence ; he delivers a most affecting complaint of his solitary and friendless circumstances, supported by a belief that nothing was too hard for the Lord, and assured that divine power could relieve him, though all human help failed. He now felt the truth of his own words, " They that know thy name will put their trust in thee, for thou, Lord, hast never forsaken those who confide in thee."

MASCHIL. A PSALM OF DAVID. WHEN HE WAS IN THE CAVE.

- 1 I CALL upon Jehovah with my voice :
 With my voice I make supplication to Jehovah.
 2 I pour forth my complaint before him :
 I make known my affliction in his presence.
 3 While my spirit is overwhelmed within me,
 Thou knowest my way :
 In the way where I walk, they privily lay a snare for me.

and those who adhered to him, to enable us to point out the instances to which he here alludes ; but the murder of Abimelech, and of the priests who were with him, furnishes a pregnant proof of the atrocities which Saul and his agents were capable of perpetrating. See 1 Sam. xxii. It appears from the language of this verse, that such enormities were not confined to

a few cases, but must have been numerous, to give occasion to the image which is employed to describe them. As a man who ploughs or digs the earth scatters it in abundance, and without remorse, so were the bones scattered of those who dared to show any sympathy for the sufferings of this proscribed and devoted man.

- 4 I look on the right hand and see, but no one acknowledgeth me :
 Refuge faileth me ; no one careth for me.
- 5 I call upon thee, O Jehovah ! I say,
 Thou art my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.
- 6 Attend to my call, for I am greatly distressed :
 Rescue me from my persecutors, for they are stronger than I.
- 7 Bring me out of prison, that I may praise thy name :
 The righteous will surround me, when thou showest kindness to me.

PSALM CXLIH.

THE Septuagint ascribes this Psalm to the period when David was in great distress, arising from Absalom's misconduct ; which is as likely an opinion as any that we can form. There is probably, in ver. 2, a tacit reference to the great transgression, the consequences of which followed David all his days. As he would not fail to be reminded of it by the sorrows which had now come upon him, and as his purpose was, notwithstanding, to implore divine support and deliverance, he deprecates God's righteous judgment, since if no man could be just with God, certainly he, who had so greatly transgressed, could have no claim to such a state. The consciousness of his guilt, though he had reason to believe it was forgiven, induced him thus to abase himself before God, when he was about to offer earnest intreaties for deliverance from dangers which threatened his dignity and life ; while he still maintained his hope, that God looked upon him as his servant, whom he had pledged himself to protect.

A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 HEAR my prayer, O Jehovah ! hearken to my supplication :
 In thy faithfulness and righteousness answer me.
- 2 But enter not into judgment with thy servant ;
 For in thy sight no one living can be justified.
- 3 For the enemy persecuteth me, he smiteth me to the earth ;
 He maketh me dwell in darkness, like men dead long ago.
- 4 Therefore my spirit is overwhelmed within me ;
 My heart within me is desolate.
- 5 I remember the former days, I meditate on thy deeds :
 I muse upon the work of thy hands.

5. *The former days.*]—The days of his prosperity, when he was so greatly favoured by the goodness of God. This seems to be his meaning, though there may be a reference to more ancient times, in which benefits of the most extraordinary kind were bestowed upon his ancestors.

- 6 I stretch forth my hands unto thee ;
 My soul resembleth a thirsty land. SELAH !
- 7 Hear me speedily, O Jehovah ! my spirit faileth :
 Hide not thy face from me, for I am like those who go down to
 the grave.
- 8 Cause me soon to experience thy goodness, for in thee do I trust :
 Cause me to discern the way in which I should walk,
 For I lift up my soul unto thee.
- 9 Deliver me, O Jehovah ! from my enemies :
 In thee is my protection.
- 10 Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God :
 Thy spirit is good, lead me in a land of uprightness.
- 11 Revive me, O Jehovah ! for thy name's sake :
 In thy faithfulness, bring my soul out of trouble.
- 12 By thy goodness, let my enemies be brought to silence :
 And destroy all who afflict my soul ;
 For I am thy servant.

PSALM CXLIV.

SOME signal and illustrious victory, which David obtained over the enemies of his kingdom and people, is triumphantly celebrated in this admirable song of praise. The grateful author of it does not, indeed, confine himself to the offering of thanksgiving, but mingles with it various earnest requests, that the power and goodness which had been so signally displayed, might be perpetuated to him and to his country ; that they might finally vanquish, and entirely subdue, their perfidious and treacherous adversaries. The sacred writer was so elevated by his grateful feelings and sentiments as to declare, that he would sing a new song, a triumphant hymn, to be composed in remembrance of the joyful occasion.

This new song appears to commence with the verse in which he announces his intention : in the course of it he takes occasion to present devout supplications for prolonged favours and extended prosperity. At length, while reflecting upon the multitude of divine favours which had been imparted to his

10. *A land of uprightness.*] — The original word for uprightness sometimes means plain, *i. e.* free from impediments, in which sense it is probably to be taken here ; and the prayer will then be, that

God would direct his course in a way that would prove productive of safety to him, and of deliverance from the difficulties by which he was at present surrounded.

country, he breaks out into a rapturous eulogium upon the happiness of Israel, distinguished by the peculiar care, and enriched by the inexpressible advantages, which flowed from their relation to God, who had so largely accomplished the promises which he gave to their pious forefathers.

OF DAVID.

- 1 BLESSED be Jehovah ! my strength :
Who teacheth my hands for war, my fingers for battle.
- 2 My benefactor, and my fortress; my high tower, and deliverer;
My shield, my confidence, who subdueth peoples under me.
- 3 O Jehovah ! what is man, that thou takest notice of him ?
The son of man, that thou regardest him ?
- 4 Man is like a vapour :
His days, like a shadow, pass away.
- 5 O Jehovah ! bow thy heavens, and descend :
Touch the mountains, that they may smoke.
- 6 Cast forth lightning, and scatter them ;
Shoot forth thy arrows, and disturb them.
- 7 Send thy hand from above ;
Rescue me, and deliver me from great waters ;
From the hand of foreign peoples :
- 8 Whose mouth uttereth vanity ;
And whose right hand is a right hand of treachery.
- 9 I will sing a new song unto thee, O God !
Upon the lute, and an instrument of ten strings,
Will I sing praises unto thee.
- 10 He giveth victory to kings :
He delivereth David his servant from the deadly sword.

5. *Bow thy heavens.*]—This expression is derived from the appearance of the clouds during a tempest: they hang low, so as to obscure the hills and mountains, and seem to mingle earth and heaven together. Such an appearance is figuratively used to depict the coming of God, to execute vengeance upon the enemies of his people. See Psalm xviii. 10, and other instances.

6. *Scatter them.*]—The antecedent of "them" is "peoples," in ver. 2.

8. *Uttereth vanity.*]—Talks of vain projects; utters foolish, impious, and profane language.

— *A right hand of treachery.*]—In taking an oath the right hand was lifted up. The enemies of David profaned their oaths, by violating the covenants into which they entered, and breaking their solemn engagements.

- 11 Rescue me, and deliver me from the hand of foreign peoples :
 Whose mouth uttereth vanity ;
 And their right hand is a right hand of treachery.
- 12 Grant prosperity to our sons,
 That they may resemble plants, which grow in their youth :
 To our daughters, that they may be like carved columns,
 Resembling those of a palace.
- 13 That our granaries may be full, abounding with every store :
 That our sheep may bring forth thousands,
 And tens of thousands, in our pastures.
- 14 That our beeves may be laden with fatness :
 That there may be no hostile incursion, no going forth,
 Nor any outcry in our streets.
- 15 Happy the people ! who are in such a case :
 Happy the people ! whose God is Jehovah.

PSALM CXLV.

THE design of this Psalm, as its contents abundantly show, is to celebrate the power, righteousness, and goodness of God. It was probably written towards the conclusion of David's reign, when the kingdom of Israel had attained its highest prosperity, and was blessed on every side with the enjoyment of perfect peace and security.

During the attention which the writer of these remarks has necessarily given to the work which is now approaching its close, he has, in several instances, felt so powerfully the excellence of these songs of Zion, as to think that that

12. *Grant prosperity.* English Translation, *That our sons.*]—The word rendered “that” may, with strict propriety, be translated, “Bless, or grant prosperity to,” which makes a much more significant sense. In this, and the next two verses, the English Bible marks not fewer than seventeen words in italics, to indicate that there is nothing in Hebrew to correspond with them. I have not followed this example, because I have inserted no words but such as are necessary to present, what appears to me to be, the sense of the original. Without such

insertions the passage could not be made intelligible to English readers ; and it is, in my opinion, a needless scrupulosity to mark them. It is quite sufficient to justify this practice that the English be a correct representation of the meaning of the Hebrew.

14. *No going forth.*]—This may mean either no going forth of the Israelites to battle against their invading foes, or their being forcibly taken out as captives to a foreign country. By these expressions the Psalmist therefore prays for perpetual peace.

on which he had last been engaged surpassed, in interest and beauty, all that had preceded. He does not mean to pledge himself to the perfect correctness of this view; but, with regard to the Psalm which is now the object of consideration, he may venture to say, that if others equal to it may be selected, none certainly can be found superior, in the lucid simplicity and native grandeur of its diction, or in the affecting and engaging sentiments which it discloses. It places before us the omnipotence of the Deity, combined with such express assertions of his essential rectitude and goodness as we cannot contemplate, without perceiving that, glorious as are his works, He himself is surpassing in glory and beauty, and that no object on which our thoughts can be fixed bears any comparison with Him. There are in the bosoms of all men, who are in some measure acquainted with themselves, so many memorials of weakness and of guilt, that the Almightyness of God, when viewed apart from the unchangeable rectitude and benignity of his character, is far more likely to produce emotions of dread and horror, than any sentiments of confidence or delight. But when we behold omnipotence united with infinite love, and with wisdom and rectitude so absolutely perfect, that it is the most impossible of things for him to do wrong, then, if we desire his favour and friendship to forgive and sustain us, hope extends its consoling energies to our hearts, and we learn to rejoice in knowing that He, in whose hands ourselves and all creatures are, and must ever be, is invested with power to effect all the purposes of his beneficent will, and to feel that we are safer in his keeping than in our own; and that though we are frail, feeble, and unworthy, He is pledged by the necessary excellence of his nature to educe good from evil, and so to direct all events, temporal and eternal, as shall demonstrate him to be the only wise and good, and to be worthy of all glory and honour from the whole intelligent universe.

A PSALM OF PRAISE. OF DÀVID.

- 1 I WILL extol thee, my God, O King !
And I will bless thy name for ever and ever.
- 2 Every day will I bless thee :
And I will praise thy name for ever and ever.
- 3 Great is Jehovah, and greatly to be praised :
And his greatness is unsearchable.
- 4 One generation will praise thy works to another ;
And will declare thy mighty acts.
- 5 I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty ;
And of thy wondrous works.
- 6 Men also will speak of the might of thy admirable deeds ;
And I will declare thy greatness.
- 7 They will abundantly utter the memorial of thy great goodness ;
And sing of thy righteousness.

- 8 Jehovah is gracious, and full of compassion :
Slow to anger, and of great mercy.
- 9 Jehovah is good to all :
And his tender mercies are over all his works.
- 10 O Jehovah ! all thy works will praise thee :
And thy saints will bless thee.
- 11 They will speak of the glory of thy kingdom ;
And talk of thy power :
- 12 To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts ;
And the glorious majesty of his kingdom.
- 13 Thy kingdom is a kingdom of all ages :
And thy dominion is everlasting.
- 14 Jehovah sustaineth all them that are falling ;
And all that are bowing down he maketh to stand erect.
- 15 The eyes of all are directed to thee ;
And thou givest them their sustenance in its season.
- 16 Thou openest thy hand,
And satisfiest the desire of all the living.
- 17 Jehovah is righteous in all his ways :
And gracious in all his works.
- 18 Jehovah is nigh unto all who call upon him ;
Unto all who call upon him with sincerity.
- 19 He will accomplish the desire of them that fear him :
He also will hear their cry, and will save them.
- 20 Jehovah preserveth all them who love him :
But all the wicked he will destroy.
- 21 My mouth shall speak the praise of Jehovah :
And let all flesh bless his holy name, for ever and ever.

PSALM CXLVI.

THE versions of the Septuagint and of the Syriac ascribe this Psalm to the times of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah : there is, however, nothing in it which prohibits us from looking upon it as a Psalm of David. The design of it is to induce men to place their hope and reliance upon God, whose power and goodness are unchangeable ; while all human aid is fallacious, precarious, and unworthy of confidence.

- 1 HALLELUJAH ! Praise Jehovah, O my soul !
- 2 While I live I will praise Jehovah :
I will sing praises unto my God, while I have my being.
- 3 Place no reliance upon princes :
Upon the son of man, in whom there is no help.
- 4 His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth ;
In that day his purposes perish.
- 5 Happy he ! whose helper is the God of Jacob :
Whose reliance is upon Jehovah, his God :
- 6 Who made heaven and earth ; the sea, and all that is in them :
Who observeth truth for ever.
- 7 Who pleadeth the cause of the oppressed ;
Who giveth food to the hungry ;
Jehovah setteth prisoners free.
- 8 Jehovah delivereth them that are in darkness :
Jehovah maketh those who are bowed down, to stand erect.
Jehovah loveth the righteous.
- 9 Jehovah protecteth strangers :
He relieveth orphans and widows :
But he subverteth the way of the wicked.
- 10 Jehovah will reign for ever :
Thy God, O Zion ! to all ages. Hallelujah.

PSALM CXLVII.

THIS Psalm, like the preceding, is assigned by the Septuagint and the Syriac to the days of Haggai and Zechariah ; and it seems to be a probable reference, as the Psalm is perfectly adapted to the circumstances of the Israelitish people, upon their return from captivity. See ver. 2.

The subjects which are comprehended in this song of elevated devotion are, the power, omniscience, and diffusive benignity of God, displayed in the government which he carries on over the world, with an especial commemoration of his mercy and loving-kindness to his people. We, who now peruse

8. *Them that are in darkness.*—There is no word in Hebrew to correspond with the “ eyes ” of the English Bible ; and it is more in agreement with the

parallelism of the verse, to understand this clause, of persons who are in distress and adversity, expressed by being in darkness.

this admirable hymn, are in a still higher degree distinguished by the divine light which the Gospel has spread around us, and consequently are under obligations still more stringent, to reverence, adore, and bless the God of heaven and earth, who has disclosed himself to us, as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all consolation.

- 1 PRAISE ye Jehovah! for it is good to sing the praise of our God:
Praise is indeed pleasant and becoming.
- 2 Jehovah buildeth up Jerusalem:
He assembleth the dispersed of Israel.
- 3 He healeth the broken in heart;
And bindeth up their wounds.
- 4 He computeth the number of the stars:
He giveth names to them all.
- 5 Great is our Lord, and of great might:
His understanding is infinite.
- 6 Jehovah sustaineth the afflicted;
He casteth down the wicked to the ground.
- 7 Sing ye responsive thanks unto Jehovah!
Sing praise upon the harp to our God!
- 8 Who covereth the heaven with clouds;
Who prepareth rain for the earth;
Who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains:
- 9 Who giveth to the cattle their food;
And to the young ravens what they call for.
- 10 He delighteth not in the strength of a horse;
He taketh no pleasure in the legs of a man.
- 11 Jehovah taketh pleasure in them who fear him:
In those who confide in his mercy.
- 12 Praise Jehovah, O Jerusalem!
Praise thy God, O Zion!
- 13 For he strengtheneth the bars of thy gates;
He blesseth thy children within thee.
- 14 He maketh peace in thy borders;
He satisfieth thee with the finest wheat.

10. *In the strength of a horse.* Ibid. *in the legs of a man.*—The kings of the earth delight in horses, and in swift,

active, and courageous troops: but Jehovah needs no such auxiliaries, and his delight arises from far other objects.

- 15 He issueth his command to the earth ;
 His order runneth very swiftly.
- 16 He sendeth snow like wool ;
 He scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes.
- 17 He casteth down his ice in hail-stones ;
 Who can stand before his cold ?
- 18 He issueth his command, and melteth them ;
 He causeth his wind to subside, the waters flow.
- 19 He showeth his word to Jacob ;
 His statutes and his ordinances to Israel.
- 20 He hath not done so to any nation ;
 His ordinances they have not known. Hallelujah !
-

PSALM CXLVIII.

It is not unlikely that this hymn of praise was composed for the great solemnity of the dedication of the second temple. It consists altogether of praise, calling upon all nature, heavenly and earthly, rational and irrational, to concur in praising him, whose power, wisdom, and providence are displayed in all his works. The exhortation which is addressed to inanimate and irrational beings is the language of poetry, which indulges and delights itself in attributing to every part of nature the sentiments, emotions, and feelings by which it is itself actuated : and in the lively expression of such sentiments we behold the fervent piety of the writer, which, yielding itself up to the delightful musings of impassioned imagination, peoples the universe with intelligent natures only, on which it calls to engage with itself in celebrating the matchless excellence of the Father of all, and in whom all "live, move, and have their being."

- 1 HALLELUJAH ! Praise ye Jehovah from the heavens :
 Praise him in the heights.

15. *He issueth his command.*] — The sentiment which is thus announced is equivalent to,—"He spake; it was done: he commanded, it stands fast:" and is intended to intimate the entire suberviency of every physical agent to the purposes of God's will.

17. *In hail-stones.*]—The expression, "like morsels," is a literal version of the

Hebrew, but it gives so imperfect and obscure a representation of the meaning, as to induce the substitution which is here found. There can be no doubt but that hail is the thing intended; in this the critics are unanimous. It is most likely that the Hebrew term, which is translated "morsels," means small pieces of some substance, which we cannot now determine.

- 2 Praise him, all ye his angels :
Praise him, all ye his hosts.
- 3 Praise him, ye sun and moon :
Praise him, all ye stars of light.
- 4 Praise him, ye heavens of heavens ;
And ye waters which are above the heavens.
- 5 Let them praise the name of Jehovah,
For he commanded, and they were created.
- 6 He also established them for ever and ever :
He made a decree, which none can pass over.
- 7 Praise Jehovah from the earth, ye brute monsters, and all ye
abysses.
- 8 Fire and hail, snow and vapour, stormy wind, obeying his word.
- 9 Mountains and all hills, fruitful trees and all cedars.
- 10 Beasts and all cattle :
Creeping things and winged fowl.
- 11 Kings of the earth and all peoples :
Princes and all judges of the earth.
- 12 Young men and maidens also, old men and children.
- 13 Let them praise the name of Jehovah :
For his name alone is excellent ;
His glory is above the earth and the heaven.
- 14 He also exalteth the horn of his people ;
The glory of all his favoured ones ;
The children of Israel, a people near unto himself. Hallelujah !

PSALM CXLIX.

THIS is a triumphal song, composed for the celebration of some signal victory, which the people of Israel had been enabled to gain over their enemies. Any conjectures respecting the particular event of this kind to which it relates are useless, as nothing whatever is known on the subject.

- 1 HALLELUJAH ! Sing unto Jehovah a new song :
His praise, in the assembly of his favoured people.
- 2 Let Israel rejoice in his Maker :
Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.

- 3 Let them praise his name with flutes :
 Let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and the harp.
- 4 For Jehovah taketh pleasure in his people :
 He adorneth the depressed with victory.
- 5 Let the favoured people rejoice gloriously :
 Let them sing aloud in their assemblies.
- 6 With the high praises of God in their mouth ;
 And a two-edged sword in their hand :
- 7 To inflict vengeance on the nations ;
 Punishments upon the peoples :
- 8 To bind their kings with chains,
 And their nobles in fetters of iron :
- 9 To execute upon them the prescribed punishment.
 Such honour have all his favoured people. Hallelujah !
-

PSALM CL.

THIS ode was, without doubt, employed as an excitement to celebrate the praises of God in the most magnificent manner, with every kind of instrumental music. It was probably in use during the entire continuance of the Temple services.

- 1 HALLELUJAH ! Praise God in his sanctuary :
 Praise him in the heaven of his power.
- 2 Praise him for his mighty acts :
 Praise him according to his excellent majesty.

5. *Their assemblies.*]—The word “beds” is used for couches, on which the people of the East sit in their private parties, banquets, &c., and which they also employ for their nightly repose. As the assembly in ver. 1, relates to the public assembly of the multitudes, so in ver. 5, the assemblies relate to their private companies, where the general joy and exultation prevailed.

6. *A two-edged sword in their hand.*]—These weapons were probably retained near them during their festivities, and brandished occasionally, as an expression of their warlike temper.

9. *Prescribed punishment.*]—*i. e.* The punishment which was prescribed in the law of Moses. See Deut. vii. 2 ; xxxii. 41.

PSALM CL.

1. *In the heaven of his power.*]—While men are engaged in the temple of God with the celebration of his praises, let the inhabitants of his temple in heaven, the heaven in which he has displayed the greatness of his power, unite with them in exalting and magnifying the glorious Being, from whom they all have alike derived their existence, their faculties, and their happiness !

- 3 Praise him with the sounding trumpet :
Praise him with the lute and the harp.
- 4 Praise him on the timbrel and the flute :
Praise him on stringed instruments and pipes.
- 5 Praise him on the small cymbals :
Praise him on the large cymbals.
- 6 Let every thing that hath breath praise Jehovah. Hallelujah !



ADDITIONAL NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

PSALM I.

VER. 1. *That walketh, &c.*—These words have been supposed to form a climax, in which each successive expression increases the force of the sentiment. This opinion cannot, however, be supported, but by having recourse to forced and groundless verbal distinctions. “To stand in the way of sinners,” is in no degree a stronger expression than to “walk according to the counsel of the wicked;” and though the last clause, “to sit in the seat of scoffers,” marks an increase of impiety, the correspondence between the first two clauses is fatal to the supposed climax. The construction is agreeable to a common form of Hebrew versification, by which, when a sentiment has been enunciated, it is repeated with some verbal differences, for the purpose of poetical amplification and variety.

In a publication that lately came into my hands, entitled “Sacred Literature,” the learned author, a prelate of the Irish Church,* strenuously contends in favour of this imaginary climax, and seems to attribute the denial of it to a want of poetic discernment. The remarks by which he supports his opinion appear, however, to be drawn, not from the usage of Hebrew poetry, but rather from a colloquial phraseology of more modern date. He thinks, that to “walk in the counsel of the wicked,” means to be found occasionally in such company; but that “to stand in the way of sinners,” denotes habitual intercourse with them. On this distinction he founds the climax. Numerous instances may, however, be produced to shew, that in scriptural language, “to walk,” is as expressive of habitual custom, as “to stand:” one or two references will shew how little ground there is for this criticism. Psalm cxix. 1, “Blessed are the undefiled in the way, that *walk* in the law of the Lord,” means, beyond doubt, those who habitually adhere to it. Again, in ver. 3 of the same psalm, “they also do no iniquity, they *walk* in his

* Dr. Jebb.

ways." (See also Exod. xvi. 14; Levit. xxvi. 3, &c. &c.) The subject may, perhaps, by some be thought to be trivial, but nothing should be so regarded which involves a principle in the correct interpretation of the word of God. This sacred book abounds in tropical and figured diction, the due explication of which must be sought in the usages that are peculiar to it, and not in the taste or fancy of its interpreters.

Ver. 2. *Jehovah.*]—As this is the first instance in which the name יהוה occurs in the Psalms, I shall state the reasons which induce me to retain it invariably, in preference to the term "Lord," which is substituted for it in the authorised version. This word is used throughout the Old Testament, as a proper name, exclusively applicable to the God of Israel; and cannot, without impiety, be ascribed to any other person or being whatever. The English word "Lord," which is expressive only of dominion or property, is by no means equivalent to the import of Jehovah, which implies the eternity and immutability of the Supreme Being: (vide Exod. iii. 14; Hosea xii. 6.) In the language of the Apocalypse, the terms *ὁ ὢν, καὶ ὁ ἑν, καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος*, are significant of the same meaning. The English translators have followed the Septuagint, which every where translates יהוה by *ὁ Κυριος*, "the Lord," in agreement with the groundless scruples of the ancient Jews, who direct יהוה to be read wherever יהוה occurs. But though, for the reasons here stated, it appears to me that the word Jehovah should be universally retained in the Old Testament, I do not think that the employment of this name is so appropriate for Christians as that of God, *ὁ Θεος*, which is the appellation of the Most High, used by the writers of the New Testament. I make this observation because it seems to be a growing practice among writers who hold evangelical opinions, to use the name Jehovah as a characteristic appellative, in preference to that which the usage of the New Testament sanctions.

Ver. 3. *All therefore, which he doeth, &c.*]—Some critics are of opinion that the last clause of this verse relates rather to the tree which is used as an emblem of the righteous, than to the person whose prosperity is depicted by it. They translate the verse thus:—

"For he is like a tree planted near rivers of water,
That bringeth forth its fruit in its season;
And its leaf fadeth not,
And all that it produceth, it bringeth to maturity."

There is an appearance of superior elegance in this version: but it is objected, I think, with reason, that it renders the last clause a mere repetition of what is contained in the second, "that bringeth forth its fruit in its season." In addition to which, it may be remarked that

there is no authority for applying the Hiph. יִצְלִיחַ to the productiveness of a tree.

Ver. 6. *Jehovah approveth.*]—The word יִרְעֶה is frequently transferred from the exercise of the intellectual faculty, to that of the heart; so as to express taking notice with approbation.

PSALM II.

Ver. 6. *Yet have I anointed, &c.*]—The change from the third person to the first imparts a dramatic effect to the representation, which renders it more vivid without involving any material obscurity. In the English Bible this passage is translated, “yet have I set my king,” &c. In no other instance but in Prov. viii. 23 is this rendering of the Hebrew term adopted. It properly means, “I have anointed;” and in the two cases in which the translators have departed from this meaning, they have followed the Septuagint and the Vulgate, in opposition to the Hebrew text; though in the verse before us, they have placed the proper rendering in the margin.

Ver. 7. *This day have I begotten thee.*]—In addition to the note on this verse, which is appended to the text, I beg to observe, that the illustrious commentator, Calvin, entertained the view of the passage which is there given, and has expressed his judgment in very decisive terms. His words are, “Scio locum hunc de æterna generatione Christi a multis fuisse expositum, qui et in adverbio Hodie, argute philosophati sunt, acsi perpetuum actum extra tempus notaret. Sed hujus vaticinii fidelior ac magis idoneus interpret est Paulus, qui Act. xiii. 33, ad illam quam dixi cœlestis Christi gloriæ demonstrationem nos revocat. Genitus ergo fuisse dicitur, non ut filius Dei esse, quoad se, inciperet, sed ut talis patefieret mundo.”—*Calv. in Ps. ii.*

Ver. 11. *Rejoice with trembling.*]—On this passage the learned Dathe thus remarks: “The more usual signification of the word, which is here rendered ‘rejoice,’ does not seem exactly to suit the connexion. The rebel kings are admonished to submit to this heavenly king, and to acknowledge their guilt, with sorrow for their temerity. The word is, indeed, used to express both joy and grief, from its primary signification, which is, ‘to revolve in a circle.’” He cites Hosea x. 5 for an instance of its use in the latter sense, and translates the clause before us, “et cum tremore dolete,” *i. e.* “be in pain and tremble.” As the word, however, is almost invariably expressive of joy, and may be so understood here, the common translation is retained.

Ver. 12. *Suddenly perish.*]—The vulgar translation of these words

PSALM III.

5. *I lie down, &c.*—The verbs in this and the following verse are in an aoristical or indefinite sense: they imply the continuance of actions that are signified by them, according to a frequent usage in the Hebrew language.—*Schroeder, Heb. Gram.* pp. 334, 338.

PSALM IV.

The title to this psalm is, *To the chief musician, on stringed instrument*.—It is foreign from the design of these notes to engage in inquiries relative to the titles of the psalms: this would prove as unproductive in its results, as irksome in its progress. I shall, therefore, in each instance, assign what appears to me to be the most probable sense, and refer those of my readers who wish to enter more largely into the subject, to Michaelis, Rosenmüller, Horne, &c., for the disquisitions they will find, if I am not mistaken, ample evidence of the impracticability of attaining any tolerable certainty in this matter.

1. *My righteous God.*—The Hebrew אֱלֹהֵי צְדִיקָי is, literally, "God of my righteousness," and furnishes an instance in which a literal version fails to give a clear and definite sense. In Hebrew, substantives are frequently used instead of adjectives, to denote qualities: thus we have, "a man of bloods," for a bloody man; "God of truth," for a faithful God: and in the present case, we have, "God of my righteousness," for the God who judges righteously between me and my adversaries. David was elevated to the throne by the special interposition of God, who was pledged to maintain his cause, and to oppose his opposers. His cause was, therefore, the cause of God; and he presents his supplication to him, that he would manifest a righteous interposition in his favour.

4. *Commit not iniquity in your anger.*—The original terms in Hebrew, אַל תִּחַטָּא בְּרִגְוֶךָ, are literally, "be ye angry, and sin not:" *θεὶ καὶ μὴ ἀμαρτανεῖτε*, LXX.; to the same effect the Vulgate, and in this sense it is quoted Ephes. iv. 26, "be angry, and sin not," which

s, therefore, quite apposite to the Psalmist's design of cautioning
 mies against being betrayed into sinful conduct, by indulging
 iger against him.

6. *Lift thou up the light, &c.*]—There is some difficulty in ascer-
 the sense of the term הִנֵּף , here translated “lift thou up.”
 f the commentators suppose it to be of similar import with סִדֵּף ,
 splendore quodum corusco emicat;” and that it should be
 d, “cause the light of thy countenance to shine upon us.”
 are of opinion, either, that הִנֵּף is used for הִנִּיף , or that הִנֵּף is
 e reading, as in Cod. 245, Kennic. The Chaldee and Aquila
 this reading. The latter appears to me to be the preferable
 , as there can be no doubt but that there is a reference to
 vi. 26, where הִנִּיף is found.

7. *Than they have, &c.*]—There is here an ellipsis, which must
 plied to render the passage perspicuous. As it stands in the
 Bible, it is obscure and incoherent. If הִנֵּף , “gladness,” be
 d, the whole becomes clear; thus, “thou puttest gladness into
 rt, more than the gladness of the time, when their corn and
 ound.” A similar construction is found in Psalm cx. 3.—*Vide*
de Sac. Poes. Prælec. 10.

PSALM V.

9. *Their inward part is very wickedness.*]—The “inward part”
 means the internal organs of the body, the heart, liver, reins
 eys, and the bowels; all of which are employed by the Hebrews
 ess the various emotions of the soul;—all that is within a man.
 ZX. renders the phrase by $\eta \kappa \alpha \rho \delta \iota \alpha \alpha \upsilon \tau \omega \nu$, “their heart,” as we,
 ish, say to express a thoroughly bad man, ‘a man of a bad heart.’
 ebrew for “very wickedness,” employs a plural noun, the
 r of which means *barathrum*, profundum, calamitas, in order
 ess the sense intensively, and to mark the utter worthlessness
 ness of the persons who are spoken of.

10. *Destroy thou them, &c.*]—For some explanatory observations
 verse, *vide* Appendix, No. 1.

PSALM VI.

Ver. 6. *I make my bed to swim.*—The language here employed is clearly hyperbolic, and not to be taken literally, but as an expression of deep sorrow, which indulges itself in passionate exaggerations, and delights in the use of the boldest figures, to depict its undefinable and unutterable extent. If it should be thought difficult to reconcile the use of such language with the divine inspiration that is justly ascribed to the sacred writers, I would recommend to the perusal of those who thus feel, a brief extract from one of the most elegant productions of modern literature: I mean the “*Prelections on Hebrew Poetry*,” for which we are indebted to the accomplished Bishop Lowth. He thus speaks: “*Nihil derogemus Divini Spiritus afflatui etsi suam interea vim propriæ cujusque scriptoris naturæ atque ingenio concedamus. Neque enim instinctu divino ita concitatur Vatis animus, ut protinus obruatur Hominis indoles; attolluntur et eriguntur, non extinguuntur aut occultantur, naturalis ingenii facultates; et quanquam Mosis, Davidis, et Isaïæ scripta semper spirant quiddam tam excelsum tamque cœleste, ut plane videantur divinitus edita, nihilo tamen minus in iis Mosem, Davidem, et Isaïam semper agnoscimus.*”—*Prælec.* xvi. The substance of this passage is, that in assigning to each of the sacred writers the peculiar influence of his own genius, we detract nothing from the inspiration of the Divine Spirit, because the mind of the prophet is not so wrought upon by it as to lose its own faculties, which are raised, but not extinguished by the Divine afflatus. So that though the writings of Moses, David, and Isaiah, ever breathe something so sublime and celestial as to indicate their heavenly origin, yet we never fail to discern the characteristics that belong to each of them as men.

I would beg also to recommend, on this subject, to such of my readers as may not have met with it, the work of my valuable friend, the Rev. Dr. Henderson, on the inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures: in which they will find the topic discussed with the utmost candour, moderation, and intelligence, aided by extensive learning and great research.

PSALM VII.

Ver. 4. *Or have wronged him, &c.*—The Hebrew is צוֹרְרִי הָיִיתִי לְיָהוּדָה, which the common translation incloses in a parenthesis, and renders, “*yea, I have delivered him that without cause is my enemy.*”

But this version destroys the parallelism between the two members of which this verse consists, and is quite needless, as the rad. צָלַץ has for its primary meanings extraxit, exuit, spoliavit.—Vide *Simonis Lex.* who observes, in reference to this verse, “vestes et alia bona extrahere, et extrahendo avellere.”

PSALM VIII.

Ver. 1. *Who hast set thy glory, &c.*—Hebrew אֵשֶׁר הִנָּהוּ . The most common opinion respecting this disputed passage is, that הִנָּהוּ is the infinitive, from הָנַח with הִ paragog. and used as the præter indic. Others look upon it as the imperative, and render the place, “quam gloriam tuam pone etiam super cælos,” *i. e.* “as thy glory is displayed in the earth, so let it be throughout the universe.” It appears to me that הִנָּהוּ is the infinitive, used as a noun, which is a common idiom, and אֵשֶׁר is to be taken as the genitive, *sc.* “of whom is the placing of thy glory,” which is equivalent to, “who hast placed thy glory.” This is the most consistent with the scope of the passage, which is to assert that the glory of God shines throughout all nature, both on earth and above the heavens.

Ver. 2. *Babes and sucklings.*—By some interpreters these words are not understood literally, but tropically; and to be put for persons who are sincere, humble, and docile. There is, however, little reason for this figurative interpretation of what gives so good a sense, when literally taken. This notion seems to have originated from an allusion which is made to this psalm in Matthew xi. 25, but which appears to have no bearing upon the subject, unless we adopt far-fetched and forced interpretations, equally remote from common sense and sober criticism.

Ver. 5. *Little lower than the angels.*—Hebrew $\text{מִצַּעַט מֵאַלְהִים}$. Some interpreters render these words, “little lower than God,” which, according to the idiom of the language, is, “little lower than thyself.” The sense in which they take the passage is, that man is the vicegerent of God, and occupies the station next to him in the government of the world. The LXX. and the Chal. translate it “angels,” and this is the sense in which the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews takes it. (Hebrews ii. 7.)

As a part of this psalm is quoted in Hebrews ii., and applied to the humiliation and subsequent glory of Christ, it becomes necessary to inquire whether the psalm was designed to deliver a prediction to this effect, and is to be taken as strictly applicable to the Messiah. On the

most attentive consideration, I do not hesitate to say that the citation is merely allusive, and made solely for the purpose of illustration; and that the psalm has no original reference to any other topic than that which appears upon the face of it. Many passages of the Old Testament are quoted by the writers of the New Testament, in order to illustrate their statements by some analogy or resemblance between the places which they cite, and the subjects on which they are writing. This is the case in the present instance. The difficulties that are attendant on any other view of the matter are insuperable. If any of my readers should wish to see a specimen of the most forced and unnatural criticism, they will find it in the efforts which Dr. Macknight has made to support the notion that the psalm strictly relates to the Messiah. The shifts to which he is reduced are deplorable, and such as, if they were admitted, would go far towards unsettling all confidence in the integrity of the Scriptures. How different is the judgment of the acute and elegant Calvin! He thus writes: “Scimus quam libere sibi permiserint Apostoli citare Scripturæ locos: non quidem ut torquerent in alienum sensum, sed quia illis satis fuit digito monstrare, quod docebant Dei oraculis esse sancitum.” And a little further on, speaking of the application of the psalm to the Messiah, he says it is “quod quidam dicunt, aptam et congruam anagogen a membris ad caput.”

PSALM IX.

Ver. 6. In addition to the note already made on this verse, it is to be observed that the pronoun אֲנִי is very variously rendered: I look upon it as a pleonasm employed to render the expression more emphatic. “Est idiotismus linguæ cujus multa exempla extant, quo pronominebus affixis pronomen separatum ejusdem personæ, generis, et numeri, in stylo affectuoso addi solet.—*Vide sis* Glass. Dath.

Ver. 16. For the word *Selah*, *vide* Note, Psalm iii. 2.—What *Higgaion* means is very doubtful. In Psalm xcii. 4 it is evidently used for some musical instrument.

PSALM X.

Ver. 15. *Search out his wickedness till thou find none.*—The Hebrew is אֵין תִּמְצָא, *i. e.* “none shalt thou find.” Rosenmüller’s remark is, “Sollennis enim Hebræis hæc loquendi formula, quæ perquiri, nec inveniri dicuntur illa, quæ derepente excisa et deleta ita disparent, ut

nec vola, nec vestigium inveniri queat." It will, therefore, mean—"Search out and punish his wickedness so completely, that no vestige or appearance of it shall be found."

PSALM XI.

Ver. 6. *He will send down lightnings, &c.*—There is a manifest incongruity in the common version of these words. To "rain snares," is a mixed metaphor, that conveys no definite meaning. Bishop Lowth is of opinion, that the word מִיָּדָאֵשׁ means "balls of fire." Michaelis takes it to mean, "streams of lightning." His words are, "Longi enim fulminum tractus, a cœlo ad terram pertinentes, eminens visi, laqueos quodammodo referunt."

PSALM XIV.

Ver. 1. *Not one doeth good.*—The same sentiment is more strongly repeated in ver. 3; yet it appears, from vers. 5, 6, that, at this very time, there were among the people some to whom the character of righteousness is ascribed. But the number of these was comparatively small; so as to disappear in a comprehensive view of the whole population; and particularly so at this period, when the attention of the Psalmist was so strongly attracted to the almost universal defection. I shall borrow the words of Piscator, as quoted by Rosenmüller, to illustrate this part of the psalm. "Ceterum patet hyperbolen in his esse agnoscendam, ut hoc velit," &c. the sense of which is to the following effect: "There is an evident hyperbole in this passage, the meaning of which is, that the contagion of wickedness had spread so widely, that scarcely one, or not even one, could be found, who was free from it; so that if the omniscient God had made inquisition, as by a poetical representation he is said to have done, he would have found hardly one, or not even one, that had escaped the infection."

Ver. 7. *O that from Zion, &c.*—This passage shews that the psalm could not be written during the persecution which Saul carried on against David, for Zion did not come into the possession of David till after the death of Saul, (2 Sam. v. 7.) When David had obtained possession of Jerusalem and of Zion, he conveyed the ark of God to the tabernacle which he had pitched for it in Zion, (2 Sam. vi. 17.) As now David was driven from Jerusalem, and from the tabernacle, by the dangers occasioned through Absalom's conspiracy, he here prays that

Jehovah, whose presence was in Zion, would deliver the kingdom and himself from the calamities by which they were beset.

Ver. 7. *The captivity of his people.*]—This is not to be taken as if the people were actually in a state of captivity to foreign enemies; but is significant of the great troubles which were caused by the rebellion, and of which the Psalmist speaks, under the figure of a captivity, deliverance from which would be attended with signal joy and exultation. “To bring back from captivity,” is used to express deliverance, generally, from great and overwhelming trouble.—So Job xlii. 10.

PSALM XV.

Ver. 4. *He sweareth to his neighbour, and changeth not.*]—There is some doubt respecting the exact meaning of the terms נִשְׁפָּע לְחָרֵעַ. The LXX. translates them by ὁ ὁμνῶν τῷ πλησίον αὐτοῦ, καὶ οὐκ ἀθετῶν: so the Vulg. and Syr. This appears to me to be preferable to the translation of the authorized version, though the sense is much the same.

PSALM XVI.

Ver. 2. *I have said.*]—Hebrew אָמַרְתִּי. There is commonly supposed to be an ellipsis of נִשְׁפָּע, *i. e.* “Thou, my soul, hast said.” This is equivalent to, “I have said;” and as all the Anc. Vers. except the Chal. read the place in the first person, which is found also in many MSS., this is the preferable version.

Ibid. *My welfare, &c.*]—This whole passage is elliptical and obscure; and the English translators have supplied several words in this and the following two verses. The opinions of interpreters vary extremely; and all that can be done is to offer a translation that on the whole seems to be probable. The word טוֹבָתִי, rendered “my goodness,” is a very general and comprehensive term, inclusive of benignity, riches, beauty, safety, &c.; the particle עַל has sometimes the sense of præter, so that the words are literally, “my welfare is not without, or besides thee,” which is tantamount to the version here adopted.

Ver. 9. *My soul rejoiceth.*]—Hebrew וַיִּגַּל פִּבּוֹדִי;—פִּבּוֹד, is the liver, which, like the heart, the reins, &c. is used for the mind; so that the sense is, “I myself will rejoice.”—Vide Gesenius Lex. in פִּבּוֹד.

Ver. 10. *In Hades.*]—This word has been explained in the note on Psalm ix. 17. It is remarked by Dathe, “that it has been abundantly proved that שְׁאוֹל, Hades, is used to denote the place to which the spirits of men are gathered, without regard to their condition, as happy

or miserable; and that the body is consigned to the sepulchre. The divine Speaker," he adds, in this passage, "asserts that neither shall his soul abide in Hades, nor his body in the grave." There is, however, some reason to question whether this be precisely the intent of the Hebrew terms. The word נַפְשִׁי, here rendered "my soul," is of various and extensive signification: its original meaning is 'breath;' it is then applied to animal existences, which live by breathing, and especially to man, as a partaker of animal life: it is then used to express the affections and passions of the human soul; and is frequently used in the sense of 'person,' that is, a living person; and thus it comes to be employed as a periphrasis for the personal pronoun, in which way נַפְשִׁי means 'my person,' 'myself,' or 'me.' This last is probably its exact sense, in the place before us; so that the divine Speaker says, "thou wilt not leave me in Hades." This interpretation is confirmed by the construction of the next clause, in which "thy Holy One" is the parallel to 'me,' or 'myself,' in the first clause.

A mere regard for accuracy has dictated these remarks; as nothing is farther from the design of the writer than to suggest any doubts in relation to the immateriality of the human spirit; a doctrine most consonant, in his opinion, to the best philosophy; and taught by the holy Scriptures, which speak of the spirits of the just as being with Christ immediately upon their escape from the mortal tabernacle, which forms their painful and prison-like abode on earth.

PSALM XVII.

Ver. 15. *As for me, &c.*—As this verse appears in the common translation, David is represented to be looking for deliverance in a future life of blessedness, when he should be altogether freed, not only from Saul's persecutions, but from every other kind of evil. But the original words cannot, by any correct translation and interpretation, be taken in this sense. The terms which are rendered, "when I awake with thy likeness," are בְּהִקְיִיץ תִּכְוֶנֶה, which most surely convey no such meaning. The literal grammatical rendering of them is, "in the awaking of thy likeness," or, "when thy likeness is awaked." This mode of construction, in which an infinitive with a prefix is used as a noun, with another noun following, is one of the most common in the Hebrew Bible, and may be represented in English, either by a verb with a nominative case, or by a noun with a genitive following it. I shall cite out of the numberless instances in point, only four, which occur in the following psalms,—Psalm ix. 4; xii. 9; xiv. 7; xviii. 1.

It is utterly inconsistent with the *usus loquendi* to take the verb בִּהְיָתִי in the first person, as the person must be determined by the pronominal suffix of the noun that follows. It is somewhat singular that the critics and translators should so generally have concurred in a misrepresentation of this passage: and I can account for it only by supposing it to have originated in an unconscious tendency to avail themselves of every passage, in which the writers of the Old Testament seem to express their belief in a future life. It is, however, utterly unworthy to adopt a measure of this kind *with design*; nor is it in the least necessary, as there is an ample sufficiency of proof to this effect, to be drawn from passages that are beyond any exception.

We must now consider what the Psalmist means by the words that are before us; and first, "I shall behold thy face in righteousness." To behold the face of God is to be present at his worship, in the place where he had recorded his name, Psalm xlii. 3; compare Exod. xxxiv. 24. David, therefore, expresses his hope and belief, that he should be preserved from the murderous attempts of Saul and others, and be favoured with the enjoyment of the divine institutions of public worship, from which he was at present exiled. Secondly, "I shall be satisfied, when thy glory awaketh." The word הַמִּוֹנֶה, "likeness," or "image," is equivalent to מִצָּיִן, (*vide* Numb. xii. 8, where it is rendered "similitude:" compare Exod. xxxiii. 11.) Now by the similitude, or likeness, or image of God, is intended the visible glory of God, which on various occasions he was pleased to display, as a token of his acceptance and favour. When, therefore, David says, "I shall be satisfied, when thy glory awaketh," he evidently means that this satisfaction would take place when he should be restored to the worship of God, and be favoured with those visible manifestations of the divine image and glory. At present God was, as it were, asleep; he appeared to be inattentive to David and his sorrows: but this pious worshipper consoled himself with the expectation that, in due time, God would arouse himself, and render him joyful by the signal displays of his goodness. This expectation was amply accomplished; and David reigned, after the death of Saul, for forty years, in the possession of his regal dignity, and the most satisfying testimonies of divine favour.

PSALM XIX.

Ver. 4. *Their sound.*—הַקֶּיֶל אֶת הַקֶּיֶל signifies a cord for measuring, also, the chord or string of a harp: whence it is applied to 'sound.' LXX. ἡχος.—*Vide Gesen. Lex.*; this must be taken figuratively, as vers. 1—4.

PSALM XXII.

Before I proceed to set down any remarks of a critical or exegetical character on this psalm, I beg a perusal of the observations that immediately follow, respecting the mode in which it has been applied.

To recount even a small part of the opinions of critics and interpreters upon this psalm, would prove a wearisome task ; nor is any advantage likely to result from so doing, which would compensate the toil. A very brief statement of the chief of them is all that will be attempted. By some expositors it is referred to David alone, and is supposed to have been written by him, to describe some of the grievous distresses to which he was subjected. Others imagine it to be an illustration of the sufferings of the Jewish people, inflicted on them by their heathen and barbarous enemies. These hypotheses are favoured chiefly by a class of writers, who labour to exclude from the Old Testament whatever may seem to indicate a recognition of the incarnation, sufferings, and final triumph of the divine Redeemer ; and, indeed, to reduce the whole of the Christian religion itself to a system, which is most preposterously styled rational ; though it may fitly enough be denominated antisupernatural. Many of the modern German critics, who are confessedly eminent for literature and research, are the supporters, in various degrees, of this antichristian scheme : and it is a matter of regret that men, whose exertions are really, if not designedly, directed to the subversion of the gospel, should have so much deference paid to them, as is sometimes done, by writers of a better school. Could the interpretations of such scholars be fairly and efficiently supported, we must bid adieu to the Christian religion ; for if the prophecies and miracles, on which its truth is based, are to be explained away by the subtilties of many modern writers, I am at a loss to discover how the prophets and apostles are to be defended against an imputation of fraud and imposture ; and one may justly ask, what ground of belief is to be laid, on which a reasonable man is to be required to submit to them, as teachers of religion or morals ?

By a different class of interpreters it is supposed that this psalm refers, in the first instance, to David ; but was so constructed, as to be properly and designedly applicable to the sufferings of the Messiah ; and it is pleaded that this mode of interpretation is sanctioned by the fathers of the ancient church, and patronized by the early reformers. Dathe, who espouses this mode of interpretation, appears to be singularly inconsistent ; he assigns six reasons why the psalm cannot be taken as

entirely applicable to Christ, yet he is of opinion that David cannot be regarded as the sole subject of it, for that there are several passages in it which are inapplicable to him. How these two opinions are to be reconciled, in any practicable interpretation, does not appear; for if some parts are not applicable to David, how can it be maintained that it is descriptive, first, of David's history? and then, how is it to be received as an adumbration of the Messiah, to whom, for the six reasons which he specifies, the learned writer thinks it cannot be altogether assigned? This seems to preclude any decision of the matter at all, and renders it improper to apply the psalm either to David or to Christ; unless, indeed, it is to be maintained, that we are to select what belongs to David, and apply that part to him; and to take that which seems to pertain to Christ, and assign that to him. This is a mode of interpretation, however, which I can hardly suppose this acute and sagacious critic would accept.

Such being the case, we must endeavour to ascertain from the language of the psalm itself, taken in conjunction with the declarations of the Evangelists relative to it, what its proper purpose is. The Evangelists Matthew and John expressly affirm that parts of the psalm were prophetic of the treatment which our Lord met with; and that in that treatment the prophecies were fulfilled; Matthew xxvii. 35, 43, 46; John xix. 24. The Jews also, who were the instigators of the sufferings of Christ, were plainly of opinion that the psalm had reference to the sufferings of the Messiah, since they tauntingly applied it to Jesus, as a false pretender to the office and character of the Messiah, Matthew xxvii. 43. Our blessed Saviour himself indicates the same application of the psalm, by adopting the express language of it, in the extremity of his agonies. There is, therefore, no just reason for supposing that it has reference to any person but to the Messiah.

Title. *On Aijileth Shahaṛ.*]—The probable meaning of these words is that given by Lightfoot—"At the dawn of the morning."

Ver. 16. *They wound my hands, &c.*]—The application, the sense, and the reading of these words have furnished discussions better adapted to fill a large volume, than to be compressed within the limits of a brief note. On these discussions I beg to observe, 1st. That the application of the words to our Lord Jesus Christ cannot be disputed, without disregarding the authority of the New Testament, (*vide* Luke xxiv. 39; John xx. 25—27.) 2d. In reference to the sense, it appears to me, that the best rendering of מַכּוֹתֵי is, 'wounding.' The root whence the word is derived, is rendered by Aquila αἰσχυρεῖν, *foedere*; and this, both by Greek and Latin writers, is used for *torquere*, *cruciare*, *indignis modis tractare*. It seems most likely that, in crucifixion, the hands

were nailed to the cross, but the feet were fastened to it by cords, without nails; so that though "piercing" may be spoken of the hands, it cannot of the feet. This mode of fastening the body to a cross would inflict wounds of extreme pain and torment, and on this account the term wounding is preferable to that of piercing. The passages referred to in Luke and John evidently favour this sense. 3d. The reading has been disputed with extreme pertinacity; but on reviewing the case, as it is argued by the contending parties, it appears to me that the present reading is quite satisfactory, if it be taken as a participle plur. in regim. and be translated, "wounders of my hands and my feet," which is equivalent to the version which I have adopted.

Ver. 20. *My only one*; E. T. *my darling*.]—The Hebrew יְחִידִי strictly means, "my only one;" and in whatever way it is rendered, must be taken as equivalent to 'my life,' or 'my soul.' The use of this word indicates the solitary and most disconsolate condition to which Jesus was reduced when surrounded by his murderers, and having "no helper," (ver. 11.)

Ver. 21. *Savage monsters*.]—The learned appear generally to acquiesce in the opinion of Bochart, that the animal here intended is the "Oryx," a species of goat, very strong, and very savage. But as this animal is unknown in this country, the sense is expressed by "savage monsters," which is sufficiently specific.

PSALM XXIII.

Ver. 3. *He leadeth me in straight paths*.]—It may possibly be objected against the translation which is here adopted, that the word צֶדֶק is expressive of moral and not of physical qualities. It is undoubtedly thus used most frequently; but the greater number, if not the whole of the terms that are used to express moral qualities, are first applied to physical ones: this is the case with יָשָׁר and תָּם, which are commonly used to denote rectitude, and perfection, and there can be little room for hesitating that this is the case with the word צֶדֶק.—Vide *Gesen. Lex. in verb.*

PSALM XXVII.

Ver. 13.]—The Hebrew לִי־לֵא, which I have left out, is supported by no Anc. Vers. but the Chaldee. It is one of those words, *over* which the Masora places the points, to mark its absence from the most ancient Hebrew copies. Three of Kennicott's codices are without it.

PSALM XXIX.

Ver. 6. *He causeth the mountains, &c.*—There is in this verse some ambiguity in the use of the suffix ׀. By some interpreters it is referred to the cedars, (ver. 5,) and by others to the mountains Lebanon and Sirion. The latter seems to be the preferable opinion which resolves the grammatical difficulty, as in Psalm xxviii. 8.—Vide *Glass. Philol. Sac.* ed. Dathe.

PSALM XXX.

*Title.]—As this stands in the Hebrew text, and in the English Bible, it is certainly by no means appropriate to the psalm to which it is prefixed. One can, indeed, hardly imagine any thing more at variance. The solution given by Rosenmüller is certainly ingenious, and may be regarded as very probable. The whole title is, “A psalm and song at the dedication of the house of David.” Hebrew מְזִמֹּר מְזִמֹּר שִׁיר־הַנֶּכֶת הַבֵּית לְדָוִד. The learned critic referred to supposes the meaning to be, “A psalm of David,” and that the intervening words are to be taken parenthetically, intimating that the psalm is, in some respect, either of the metre or of the music, like a well-known psalm, or song, used on occasion of entering a new habitation.

PSALM XXXI.

Ver. 6. *Thou hatest them, &c.*—English Bible, “I have hated.” The present Hebrew reading is in the first person. But LXX. Syriac, Arabic, Vulgate, and Jerome, read in the second person; a reading that is confirmed by the antithetical character of the next clause.—Cod. 170; Kenn. has שָׂנֵאת יְהוָה.

Ver. 11. *A burden.*—Hebrew מֵאֵד; E. T. “especially.” Michaelis observes that the word in this place is not an adverb, “valdè,” but a substantive, “onus.” A very great improvement; as the word taken in its usual sense, as an adverb, gives no precise or definite meaning.

Ver. 20. *Conspiracies.*—“Pride,” E. T.; מְרִכְסִי אֶל רֶגְסִי colligavit: hence ‘bands,’ ‘conspiracies.’

Ver. 21. *As in a fortified city.*—The particle of similitude is wanting in Hebrew, as is not uncommon. Symmachus has ὡς ἐν πολει

περιπεφραγμενη.—Vide *Glass. Philol. Sac.* ed. Dat. vol. i. page 441. The intention of the Psalmist is evidently to describe, by a metaphor, his signal deliverance, as if he had been guarded by invincible fortifications.

PSALM XXXII.

Ver. 8. *I will give thee counsel, &c.*—English Bible has, “I will guide thee with my eye.” Hebrew, **אֵינֶנְצָה עָלֶיךָ עֵינִי**. This expression is defective, and the verb **שׁוּם** is necessary to complete it. So it will be, ‘I will counsel thee, fixing or placing my eye upon thee.’ This is an instance of the *prægnans constructio*, many of which may be found in *Glass. Philol. Sac.* The sense very clearly is, ‘I will give thee good advice, drawn from my own experience; and I will fix my eye upon thee,’ i. e. with kind and careful regard.

Ver. 9. *Which must be restrained, &c.*—English translation is, “must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.” This will appear, on the slightest attention, to be an inaccurate version; for, first, bits and bridles are not used for the purpose of keeping these animals away, but of taming and guiding them, and making them subservient to our will; and secondly, if this were the sense, it would be inappropriate, as the design of the writer is to induce men to approach to God, and not to be at a distance from him. It is certain that animals yet unbroken and untamed are meant, for the whole propriety of the figure depends on this circumstance. The Hebrew, which is very elliptical, and somewhat obscure, as is shewn by the various modes that have been adopted to explain it, is, **בְּמַחְנִירוֹסָן בְּלִבָּם לְבָלוֹם בְּלִבָּם אֱלֹהִים**. In this language **עָדִי** means, I think, ‘ornaments, apparatus, harness,’ from **עָדָה**. Vide *Gesen. Lex.* Then, in the term **לְבָלוֹם**, the construction is, that **ל** before the infinitive is used to express, ‘what is to be, must be, or ought to be;’ and the verb, which is *απαξ λεγόμενον*, is found in the Syriac, Deut. xxv. 4, **חָסַב** and applied to the muzzling of the ox; so that this part of the sentence will be, ‘as a mule, which (intell. **אֲשֶׁר**) must be bound, restrained’ (*ligari*); then the last clause, **בְּלִבָּם אֱלֹהִים**, is to be resolved by supplying **ב** which is often omitted before the same letter; by which means we get, *in non appropinquando ad te*, i. e. ‘in, or because, there is no approach to thee;’ which amounts to the version that is here adopted. The place is certainly very obscure; and I am far from being certain that an exact solution of it is given, though it is undoubtedly in agreement with the clear design of it.

PSALM XXXV.

Vers. 15, 16. *In my adversity, &c.*—These verses are, as has been stated, attended by some difficulties, though they have, I think, been magnified too greatly. The version which I have adopted is, on the whole, not unsatisfactory, though I would not undertake to say that there remains no degree of doubt respecting it. The term נִכְיִים, ver. 15, here rendered “calumniators,” has other senses put upon it, but none better. The root is נָכַח, percussit, ‘to strike or smite;’ and as this smiting was performed in the absence of the person who was the object of it, we are led to conclude that it was a smiting by the tongue. *Gesen. Heb. Lex.* gives, “conviciantes, calumniantes,” and refers to Jer. xviii. 18. The term נָרַע is significant of tearing or rending, and, by an easy figure, is applicable to wounds inflicted by evil speaking and slander. In ver. 16, we have language somewhat obscure, בְּרִחְקֵי לִעְגֵי מַעֲוֹנִים; the obscurity arises chiefly from the short and imperfect expression, but the sense assigned to it is not, I think, incapable of being supported. רָחַף is a term of frequent occurrence, which the English translation, without sufficient reason, generally renders by words expressive of hypocrisy. The sense of the root is, ‘profane,’ ‘impious,’ ‘openly wicked;’ and, as it is united with what, for want of a more familiar word, is here translated “parasites,” ‘profligate,’ or ‘dissolute,’ gives the most correct notion. The word לִעַג means, ‘to laugh, or deride;’ so Psalm ii. 4; it is here connected with מַעֲוֹנִים, ‘a round cake,’ such as they bake hastily in the east, from עָיַב, ‘to bake,’ Ezek. iv. 12; the grammatical construction appears to be, that the first two terms are in regimen: thus, ‘with profligates of laughers of a cake,’ *i. e.* men so base, that, for the sake of a piece of bread, they will scoff and jest at the most sacred things and most worthy persons. *Vide* Prov. xxviii. 21. Since writing the above, I am happy to find it agrees with the interpretation of the learned Ainsworth.

PSALM XXXVI.

Ver. 2. *That his iniquity, &c.*—In addition to the remarks which are subjoined to this verse, I have to express my opinion, that the English translation does not represent, with accuracy, the meaning of the original terms. They are, indeed, rendered obscure by the brevity with which the passage is expressed. The Hebrew is לִמְצֵנֶה לִשְׂנֵא עֲוֹנוֹ, which cannot, I think, be justly rendered as in the English

Bible. The first of these words is an infinitive with a prefix; and it literally means, 'to, for, or concerning the finding,' *sc.* of his iniquity, עֲוֹנוֹ, 'to hate, or that he may hate it.' This, when put into an intelligible form, may be expressed as in the version that is adopted, *viz.* "that his iniquity will not be found to be hateful;" which is the opinion of the wicked man, the delusion that he puts upon himself concerning the discovery of his iniquity. The prefix ל cannot, I imagine, be translated with any propriety by "until."

PSALM XXXIX.

Ver. 6. *Walketh as a shadow.*]—פֶּצֶלֶם, literally, 'in a shadow;' but the prefix ב is often used for כ, as a particle of similitude, "sicut, more."—*Vide Gesen. Lex.* Dathe translates the passage by, "umbram sectatur," which gives a good sense, *sc.* "he pursues a shadow," but does not convey the exact notion of the figure that is conveyed by the Hebrew.

Ibid. Heapeth up treasures.]—There is nothing in the Hebrew text which corresponds with "treasures," but transitive verbs are often used without a subject, when the meaning is clearly involved in them; which is the case here, in the verb יִצְבֵּר. This observation is applicable also in ver. 9, where we have עָשִׂיתָ without an accusat.

PSALM XL.

Ver. 1. *He will incline, &c.*]—The sense evidently requires the insertion of "his ear," though (this word is not in the text. It has before (Psalm xxxix. 6), been observed, that several transitive verbs are used without an object, in cases where the sense is clear and not easily mistaken. The common version of the first three verses of this psalm, which takes most of the verbs in the præter tense, renders the whole composition very obscure. So translated, they represent the speaker in the act of thanksgiving for the signal favours bestowed upon him; while the last six verses describe him as oppressed, almost beyond endurance, by various troubles and afflictions. This cannot be right. Bishop Horsley has attempted to meet this difficulty, by rendering the verbs in vers. 12, 13, in the imperfect tense. It seems, however, to be the best mode of solving this difficulty, to take the verbs in the commencement of the psalm, in their natural sense, as futures. By this method, consistency is preserved throughout the whole; and

it stands as a declaration made by the Messiah, in the near prospect of his final sufferings. A word or two may be here added respecting the grounds on which such an application of the psalm is made. The chief and all-sufficient support of this statement is derived from the Epistle to the Hebrews, which refers to a part of it, as being prophetic of the propitiatory sufferings of Christ. I can conceive of no reasonable objection, on scriptural and christian principles, that can be made to this view of the case. The apostles of Christ were as competent to deliver authoritative interpretations of the Old Testament, as they were to announce any christian doctrine or instruction whatever. If this be denied, and the denial can be maintained, the books of the New Testament are deprived of their authority, and the apostles are no longer to be regarded as persons whose decisions we are bound to respect. To this may be added, that if the psalm does not relate to Christ, we are altogether in the dark with respect to its application, which certainly cannot be to David. In the introduction to the twenty-second psalm, I have stated the reasons why we cannot regard one part of a psalm as referable to one person, and another to a different person, though this mode of interpretation seems to be sanctioned by Dathe; in reply to which, I beg attention to a few words from Rosenmüller, who says, in reference to this method, "*Quam interpretationem sobriæ hermeneutices leges vix admittunt.*"

Ver. 5. *No one has arranged, &c.*]—This version of אֵין עָרַף אֱלֹהִים is as literal as it can be, and gives a very appropriate sense. It resembles Rom. xi. 34, 35, "Who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor?"

Ver. 6. *My ears hast thou opened.*]—There is a well-known variation in the apostle's citing of these words. It is sufficient here to observe, that he quoted from the Septuagint, which, instead of אֲזַנִּים לִי פָרַתָּ לִי, gives *σῶμα δὲ κληρονομῶμι*. This, however, gives a sense not essentially diverse. The remark of Dathe on it is, "*Sensus horum verborum est, aures mihi dedisti, sc. ut plane intelligam. Sic enim Latine dici potest, aures Deus nobis patefecit, pro dedit, sc. fecit. Quem sensum οἱ ὁ indicarunt; nam κληρονομῶν uti in Novo Test. ab eis sæpe pro facere, perficere, usurpatur.*"

Ver. 12. *My calamities.*]—The Eng. Bib. reads, "my iniquities," with which agree the LXX. *αἱ ἀνομίαι μου*; and this is certainly the most common sense of עֲוֹן and its cognate terms. But we may render the word here in the sense of "calamitas, miseria," both of which are given by Gesenius, though Dathe and Rosenmüller take it in the sense of sin, crime, iniquity. Yet the former of those critics renders Psalm xxxi. 7, by "miseriam," and xxxi. 10, by "afflictionem meam;" and the latter has

in ver. 7, "miseriam," and in ver. 10, "noxa;" and he remarks, "non tantum significat עֲוֹן errorem, peccatum, quo vel alii, vel ipsi peccanti nocetur, quo quidem sensu frequentius in Cod. Heb. usurpatur, verum etiam damnum quod vel proprio vel alterius peccato contrahitur, atque generatim omne omnino infortunium." Horsley, who takes the common version, "iniquities," says, "the Messiah, when he is personated in the Psalms, perpetually calls those iniquities his own of which he bore the punishment," (note D. in Psalm xl.) an observation in which I imagine few readers of sober judgment will acquiesce, though it is in unison with the mode of applying to Christ nearly all the Psalms of David adopted by Cocceian and Hutchinsonian interpreters. The fact is, that in no one place in the Psalms does the Messiah thus speak. Dathe has stated with perfect correctness, "nunquam de sponsore dicitur cum suorum peccatorum penas luere."

It may be further observed, in support of the interpretation that is now given, that though in this Psalm there are several very strong expressions of great affliction, this is the sole instance in which any thing that has even the appearance of an acknowledgment of transgression is found. This is the more observable, because in those Psalms in which there is an evident design to make confessions of iniquity, they are repeated again and again.—*Vide* Psalms vi. xxv. xxxii. xxxviii. and xxxix. &c.

PSALM XLI.

Ver. 9. *Lifteth up his heel.*—הִנְדִּיל, with פָּה, means 'to speak proudly,' with לְעֹשׂוֹת, 'to act proudly;' and here when used with "the heel," appears to mean, the making the heel powerful, by a muscular exertion; to inflict a heavy blow. A figure taken from an irritated horse. This passage is cited by our Saviour, John xiii. 18, to aggravate the guilt of Judas. But the citation is merely allusive, as in Matt. i. 15—17.

PSALM XLII.

The title is—*Maschil. For the sons of Korah.*—The term Maschil most likely means an instructive poem; or else it must be taken as a mark for some peculiarity, either in the metre or the music. The latter sense is adopted by Michaelis and Rosenmüller. The sons of Korah were Levites, descended from the Korah of whom we read in Numb. xxvi. 9—11. The posterity of these Levites were appointed by David to sing the sacred hymns that were used in divine worship; among these, Heman was

the chief. Several Psalms have the superscription, "To the sons of Korah;" and some of these compositions seem to have been written by the most distinguished of these persons.

Ver. 1. *As the deer panteth, &c.*]—פָּאֵגֶל תַּעֲרֹג The noun here used is of the masculine gender, and the verb is feminine. This anomaly is accounted for in different ways. The noun, in the present version, is rendered by "deer," which is of both genders. The verb appears properly to be, clamare, glocitare; but as the sounds emitted by this animal, when oppressed by extreme drought, are indicative of strong desire, the present translation is sufficiently literal.

Ver. 4. *Of these things I make mention.*]—There is no great difficulty attendant on this passage, yet it is variously represented by translators. The version which is here adopted appears to me to be the most probable. "To pour out the soul," is significant of giving way to the strongest inward emotions, and is expressive of the deepest sorrow. The omission of the suffix מ in the word מַדִּים may be objected to, but I look upon הַמִּין חוֹגֵג as exegetical of it, and our usage renders it unnecessary.

PSALM XLV.

Ver. 4. *Admirable deeds.*]—The word בִּרְאוֹת, which in the English Bible is translated "terrible things," is descriptive of achievements fitted to excite veneration, love, and admiration, though the notion of terror, which is often involved in it, is not to be altogether excluded.

Ver. 6. *Thy throne, O God.*]—To transcribe a small part of the controversial writings which this passage has excited, would be to occupy my entire volume. I must, therefore, be content to state, in few words, my reasons for the version which is here adopted. 1. No man can show that this version is inconsistent with the usage of the Hebrew language. The term אֱלֹהִים is thus used in the vocative very many times in the book of Psalms; nor can any reason be alleged why it should not be so taken in this place, except such as is supported by theological, and not by philological arguments. 2. The apostle, in Heb. i. 8, takes it in this sense,—“Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever,”—where he uses the nominative for the vocative, as is done in other parts of the New Testament, and generally throughout the Septuagint.—Vide *Bloomf. in Nov. Test.* This example of apostolic use is, in my apprehension, final. 3. Any other version, such as “God is thy throne,” &c. is so manifestly unexampled, and so clearly to be traced to theological predilection, as to be perfectly inadmissible.

Ver. 8. *Of Armenia.*]—Heb. בְּמִי. The English translation, “where-

by," which seems to be taken from the $\epsilon\lambda\omega$ of the LXX. is little better than an unmeaning tautology. The word is the proper name of a country, so Jer. li. 27, and, as has been shown by Bochart, is used for Armenia. As for "ivory palaces," Ahab, it is said, 1 Kings xxii. 39, "built an ivory house;" and Amos, iii. 15, makes mention of houses of ivory. In such houses, or apartments in them, the royal robes were deposited, and brought forth on occasions of pomp and splendour.

PSALM XLIX.

Ver. 5. *My treacherous foes.*]—Heb. יָצִיטִי . This word, which commonly means 'heels,' as in English translation, is also used for persons who supplant others, 'kick up their heels,' by their insidious conduct. Thus Jacob is said by Esau to be rightly named, for he had supplanted him, Gen. xxvii. 36.

Ver. 11. *Be celebrated in the earth.*]—The English Bible has here, "They call their lands after their own names." $\text{קָרְאוּ בְּשֵׁמוֹתָם עָלֵי אֲדָמוֹתָם}$, which means, "that men will celebrate their names through or over the lands."—Vide *Rosen. Schol. in loc.*

PSALM LI.

Ver. 4. *So that thou wilt be justified.*]—It may with propriety be objected to the common translation of this passage, "that thou mightest be justified," &c. that it represents the Psalmist as saying that his sins had taken place for this purpose. "In altero membro לְמַעַן non causaliter, sed consecutive est explicandum."—*Dathe*. So Calvin and Rosenmüller. The first-named of these expositors, sc. *Dathe*, on the former part of the verse, "against thee, thee only," &c. has this extraordinary remark,—"*Ilaud dubie omnes, præter aulicos Davidis administratos, peccatum ejus ignorabant,*"—a gloss which little agrees with the general sagacity of this learned man.

Ver. 5. *In iniquity was I shapen, &c.*]—After the censure which the last note delivers of *Dathe's* remark, it is but justice to him to copy his observations on this place: "Non possum assentiri interpretibus, qui negant hæc verba de peccato sic dicto originali, sive de connata omnibus hominibus vitiositate agere. Etenim neque nexus, neque scopus videtur adversari hujusmodi querelis Davidis. Tam parum quidem excusat hac confessione suum peccatum, quam Paulus in Epistola ad Romanos, capite septimo, ubi hanc ipsam connatam vitiositatem accusat, et complurium

peccatorum præter voluntatem suam admissorum causam dicit. Dolet miseram sortem corruptæ humanæ naturæ, uti homines omnes pii eam dolent, necque tamen propterea sese minus peccasse fatentur. Et quando David prioris puritatis restitutionem, (ver. 12, seq.) optat, intelligit illam animi tranquillitatem, quam homo pius sentit, qui a peccatorum præreticorum culpa vacuus est, licet naturalis infirmitatis sibi conscius sit, sed quam divina gratia se non indignum reddere novit."

PSALM LVI.

Ver. 2. *Proudly, or with pride and insolence.*—מָרוֹם. "Rectius, haud dubie nomen מָרוֹם accipitur, per ellipsin præfixi ב pro adverbio, illorum, qui vatem oppugnarent affectum exprimente, *q. d.* oppugnant me בְּמָרוֹם cum elatione, *h. e.* elato animo, insolenter."—*Rosenm. in loc.*

PSALM LVIII.

Ver. 1. *Ye rulers.*—אֱלִים pro אֱלִים. Dii, applied to magistrates. So Dathe, who refers to Psalm lxxxii. 1, where אֱלִי sing. is used collectively for judges; and אֱלִיִּים, plur. A different version is proposed by Gesenius, in which Rosenmüller coincides. He renders the verse thus: "Num revera silentium justitiæ proloquimini? *i. e.* Num revera justitia, quæ tamdiu siluit et obmutuisse videtur, utimini in decretis vestris." But it is no easy matter to extract this version from the Hebrew words; and when effected, it gives a very jejune and dubious meaning. I prefer the translation which is given, on account of its agreement with Psalm lxxxii. 1, and because it offers a very consistent and clear sense, in harmony with the evident design of the Psalm, by merely taking אֱלִים as a plural, with the omission of the letter ך.

Ver. 5. *Which listeneth not.*—It is an oriental practice for persons skilled in such matters to use certain musical sounds, in order to attract the attention of these venomous reptiles, and to render them submissive to their wishes.

Ver. 9. *Before your cooking vessels, &c.*—It would puzzle Œdipus himself to make any tolerable sense of the English translation of this verse. It refers to the usage of travellers in the East, who, when journeying through the deserts, make a hasty blaze with the thorns which they collect,—some green and full of sap, others dry and withered,—for the purpose of dressing their food; in which circumstances, violent storms of wind not unfrequently arise, which sweep away their fuel and entire

apparatus, before the vessels which they use become warm by the heat. An expressive and graphical image of the overwhelming ruin of wicked men!

PSALM LIX.

Ver. 7. *With their mouths they utter mischief.*]—There is nothing in the text for “mischief,” but, as has before been remarked, verbs transitive are sometimes used with an ellipsis of the object. The full phrase is found in Prov. xv. 28. יִבְיַעַרְעוֹתַי פִּי רָשָׁעִים.

Ver. 9. *O, thou my strength! to thee will I sing praise.*]—English Translation, “Because of his strength, will I wait upon thee,” which is very incongruous. The Hebrew text has עָזוֹ אֵלֶיךָ אֲשַׁמְרָה. With regard to the first of these words, עָזוֹ, all the Anc. Vers. read עָזִי, as do also six Codd. Kenn. The last term, אֲשַׁמְרָה, is in the seventeenth verse of the Psalm, which is manifestly a repetition of this, אֲזַמְרָה, in which the Syriac and Arabic coincide. The copyist appears to have placed ש instead of ז, an error not very unlikely to take place from the similarity of sound.

PSALM LX.

Ver. 4. *Grant thou a banner.*]—The verb is future, נִתְּתִי, to be taken in the imperative, as is not unfrequent.

Ver. 8. *Over Philistia, &c.*]—The verb here, הִתְרוֹעָעִי, is the infinitive, used as a noun, with a suffix, “Over Philistia is my jubilation, my joyful shouting.” עַל פְּלִי pro עלי.

PSALM LXV.

Ver. 1. *There is silent hope, &c.*]—לֵךְ דְּמִיָּה תְהִלָּה. We have here two nouns, but no copulative, *συνδερον*. The first, דְּמִיָּה, is silence, the silence of devout adoration and expectation. Dathe translates thus: “Tu, O Deus, tranquille expectandus et laudandus es Sione.”

Ver. 9. *Makest it to be abundant; i. e. renderest it very fertile.*]—English translation, “and waterest it.” The translators derived the term from שָׁקָה, but it is more properly from שֹׁקֵק נְשֹׁקֵק, abundare fecit.—*Gesenius*.

PSALM LXVIII.

Ver. 4. *Jah is his name.*]—English translation, “By his name Jah.” Hebrew, **יְהוָה שְׁמוֹ**. This is an instance of what the grammarians denominate **ב**, *essentiæ*. Winer insists that no such idiom belongs to the Hebrew language, though it is found in Arabic. He therefore translates the Hebrew by, “in Jah (in voc. Jah) est, continetur nomen ejus.” Gesenius defends the contrary opinion. Glassius also supports the doctrine of **ב**, *essentiæ*, at length, with an enumeration of many of the texts in which it occurs; he also cites De Dieu and Schultens as holding the same doctrine.—*Philol. Sac.* Edit. Dathe, p. 587. It is not, I think, a dispute of much moment, as the version which Winer gives is little different from that which is here adopted.

Ver. 11. *The Lord performed his promise.*]—English translation, “The Lord gave the word.” I have adopted the version of Dathe, which appears to me to be quite correct, and greatly preferable to the common version. His words are, “Sic verito, quoniam in sequentibus haud dubie sermo est de initiis promissæ victoriæ a divino auxilio expectandæ. Quidni etiam **נִמְר** promissum? nam **נִמְר** sæpe est promittere, multa loca probant.”—*v. c.* Deut. vi. 3; Jer. xviii. 10; Isa. xxxviii. 15.

Ver. 13. *Though ye have lain, &c.*]—It is not easy to determine the precise sense of **שָׁכַבְתִּים**. The learned differ much in explaining it. The word occurs in Ezek. xl. 43, evidently in a sense similar to that which is here intended; and it can hardly be doubted that there it is descriptive of some of the furniture used in offering burnt sacrifices. And as the persons who were much employed about the fires, and other requisite menial services, would contract a soiled and squalid appearance, I take this to be the meaning intended; *i. e.* ‘though your past adversity has been such as may be fitly portrayed by an image of this kind, the prosperity with which you are now favoured may be represented under the similitude of a dove,’ &c.

Ver. 14. *There was splendour, &c.*]—Hebrew, **תִּשְׁלֹג בְּצִלְמוֹן**. The sense which is given by Gesenius to the verb is, “canduit instar nivis;” and by Winer, to the same effect, “nivis colorem traxit.” As for the noun which is rendered “in Salmon,” it is difficult to say what is the application of such a version. There was a hill called Salmon, but it is not apparent what this passage has to do with it, though the LXX. have given this sense. It seems more likely to be an appellative for shade or darkness, so that the sense will harmonize with ver. 13, “Though you have been in bondage, and the darkness of a dejected

condition, you are now illuminated with the splendour of victory and prosperity."

Ver. 18. *Thou ascendest on high &c.*—No doubt can, I think, be entertained that the interpretation which is given of this passage in the explanatory note upon it, is the literal and correct meaning; and that the ascending which is mentioned is the ascending of the ark, the symbol of God's presence, to its permanent abode on Zion. There would be no reason for further inquiry respecting the passage, had not the apostle, in Ephes. iv. 8, cited it, as an illustration of the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. On this account it becomes necessary to inquire, on what principle this citation is made. The apostle's words are, *Διο λεγει, αναβας εις υψος ηχημαλωτησεν αιχμαλωσιαν, και εδωκε δοματα τοις ανθρωποις*. Now the first thing to be noticed is, that the apostle does not quote the Hebrew exactly; this represents God as the receiver of gifts, whereas *εδωκε*, the term used by the apostle, is just the reverse: viz. he is the giver. The reading of the Septuagint agrees with the Hebrew, though a few Codd. have *εδωκε*, which Schleusner observes, "*Paulo originem debet.*"—*Lex. in LXX*. Without entering largely into a discussion upon this topic, it appears to be sufficient to remark, that if the apostle had meant to quote the verse as strictly applicable to Christ, he would have quoted it precisely. His not having done so furnishes reason for thinking that this was not his intention. The manner in which he introduces the citation is, in my apprehension, such as to intimate that he intended a mere allusion to the psalm, as being couched in terms that were applicable to his purpose: *διο λεγει* are not words which lead us to suppose that he meant to cite a direct prediction; there is no person expressed as the speaker; it is put impersonally, and might be translated "as is said," &c. If it could be shown, which I think it cannot, that the verse in question properly and directly relates to the ascension of Christ, then consistency would render it necessary to interpret the entire psalm on this principle; which cannot be done without putting great force upon it, and setting at defiance all rules of legitimate exegesis, a practice which would not be endured in reference to any ancient book but the Bible. This book has, indeed, in instances innumerable, been interpreted in a way which gives too much reason for saying of the persons who thus explain the Bible, that, instead of aiming to show the proper sense of the divine oracles, they give up their judgment to the guidance of a vagrant imagination; and, instead of affording support to the doctrines of the gospel, furnish matter for the ridicule and sneers of men, who are willing to fasten on the religion itself, the absurdities which they discover in some of its defenders. The words of the great Reformer of Geneva, in his commentary on Psalm viii.

show that his judgment on this subject was not very remote from the sentiments that have just been expressed. He says, when speaking of Paul's application of that psalm to Christ, "Non est exegeticum sed κατ' ἐπεξεργασίαν ad suum institutum deflectit, quod alio sensu dictum fuerat;" and a little afterwards, in relation to this very passage, he observes, "non tam interpretatur (Paulus) quam pia deflectione ad Christi personam accommodat."—*Calv. in Psalm viii.* I would beg to recommend to some of those persons who call themselves by the name of this distinguished scholar and interpreter, a careful contemplation of the words which are here placed before them.

Ver. 30. *The beast of the reed.*]—חַיַּית הַקָּמָר. Numberless conjectures are made respecting the animal that is here meant. The most probable is, I think, that of Bishop Lowth, which is adopted by Schnurrer, Rosenmüller, &c.—that the lion is intended. The whole passage is figurative, and used to represent the chiefs of hostile nations, and their armies, as is observed in the explanatory note.

PSALM LXIX.

Ver. 5. *O God! thou knowest my foolishness.*]—I shall support the interpretation which I have given of this verse in the explanatory note upon it, by reference to a writer who will not be suspected of any tendencies to conceal or diminish, in any degree, the testimony of the Scriptures to the fact of Christ's dying in the place and for the salvation of men. His words to which I refer are, "Frustra laborat Augustinus quomodo in Christum hoc competere potuerit: et tandem in membra transfert quod de capite non fuisset proprie dictum. Ironica enim loquutio est, qua David iniquis hominum judiciis oppressus, se ad Deum confert, eumque implorat vindicem. Hac vero magis emphaticum est, quam si palam et sine figura dixisset, notam esse suam integritatem Deo: quia hoc modo hostes suos mordaciter perstringit, et quasi ex alto despicit eorum maledicta."—*Calv. in Psalm lxi.*

Ver. 10. *I weep, &c.*]—וְאֶבְכֶּה בְּצִוּם נַפְשִׁי. Literally, "I weep in the fast of my soul, i. e. of my desire," as the word נַפֶּשׁ here, and in many places, means.

Ver. 12. *They who sit in the gate.*]—"Otiosi," Dathe: Sacravienses, Horat. The gate was the public place in which men were wont to assemble for various purposes of business, amusement, or idle talk.

PSALM LXXI.

Ver. 6. *Thou hast been my benefactor.*]—English Translation, *Thou art he that took me out of my mother's womb.* אֶתָּה גִּדִּיתָ. The rad. גִּדִּיתָ means "securit," and, according to this radical sense, the translators appear to have governed their version; *i. e.* "Thou art my cutter from the bowels of my mother." But the term also means tribuit, pensavit, "maxime de beneficiis in aliquem collatis."—*Gesenius*.

PSALM LXXII.

Ver. 3. *And the hills righteousness.*]—בִּצְדָקָה. In the first clause of this verse Dathe supplies קִיִּל after יִשְׁאֵר, and he repeats after בִּצְדָקָה שְׁלֹום, and renders the whole thus: "The mountains will lift up their voice, and the hills will announce peace, united with righteousness." This doubtless makes a good sense, but it is rather a remodelling, than an interpretation of the text. Other modes of interpretation may be found in Rosenmüller; but the simplest appears to me to take the כ as redundant, or as a sign of the objective case: "Idque fieri non solum in prædicato, sed etiam in subjecto."—*Glass. Philol. Sac.*

Ver. 20. *The prayers of David, &c.*]—We cannot, with any degree of certainty, determine to what this applies: this Psalm does not appear to have been written by David; and, if it were, it cannot be regarded as the last which came from his pen, as there are several following ones, of which he appears to have been the composer. The entire book of the Psalms was divided, in all probability, subsequently to the time of David, into five distinct parts, or books. The first of these books terminates with Psalm xli., the second with Psalm lxxii., the third with Psalm lxxxix., the fourth with Psalm cvi., and the fifth comprehends all that remain. Each of the concluding psalms of the several books finishes with a doxology, but by whom these doxologies were appended we have no information on which we can rely. This verse, "the prayers of David," &c. may possibly have been added by the person or persons who affixed the doxologies, but on what authority, or for what purpose, we cannot determine. "De ratione tamen singulorum illorum syntagmatum, et quibus temporibus sint facta, nil certe definiri poterit." Rosenmüller thus remarks in his Prolegomena, where much more may be found on this unsatisfactory topic.

PSALM LXXIII.

Ver. 4. *Their strength is perfect, &c.*]—English Translation, *No bands in their death.* Hebrew, כִּי אֵין הַרְצָבוֹת לְמוֹתָם. The passage is obscure, and variously interpreted. The version which is here adopted is effected by dividing the word לְמוֹתָם into two, thus: לְמוֹתָם. I prefer this mode of solving the difficulty, because there is an evident incongruity in saying, that “there are no bands in their death,” and then subjoining, “their strength is firm.” There is indeed no reason to suppose that the writer intended to speak of death, but that he is describing the freedom of these men from trouble, and their great apparent prosperity in life. This interpretation I owe to Bate; vide Parkhurst’s Hebrew Lexicon. Horsley seems inclined to adopt it.

PSALM LXXIV.

Ver. 5. *They are known.*]—יָדָע. The elliptical expression of this place creates some difficulty. The verb may be taken impersonally, or as related to the nominative, צוֹרְרֵיךְ, and so taken distributively: sc. “each of thy enemies is known,” i. e. seen to be like a woodman, &c.

PSALM LXXV.

Ver. 8. *The wine is turbid.*]—This representation is taken from the master of a feast, who distributes suitable portions to the guests, according to their rank, qualifications, &c. The wine is said to be turbid, קָמַר, either on account of its being in a state of fermentation, or of the mixture with it of various ingredients, to render it stronger and more intoxicating. By this image the indignant anger of God is represented, and the wicked are warned that they shall be compelled to drain the very dregs. Vide *Winer, Heb. Lex.*

PSALM LXXVII.

Ver. 2. *My hand is stretched.*]—English Translation, *My sore ran in the night.* The Hebrew is יָדִי לַיְלָה נִגְרָה. The rad. נָגַר means expansus est. *Winer, Heb. Lex.* The Sept. has, ταῖς χερσὶ μου νυκτὸς ἐκάντισον αὐτοῦ, which the Vulgate follows.

Ver. 11. *The change, &c.*—שְׁנוֹת יָמִין עָלִיוֹן. The verb is infinitive, used for a noun, in apposition to חֲלֹתֵי.

Ver. 13. *Thy way is holy.*—English Translation, *Thy way is in the sanctuary.* בְּקֶדֶשׁ יִרְבֶּה, Thy way is with sanctity.

PSALM LXXXI.

Ver. 16. *I would have fed them.*—This is the reading of the LXX., the Vulgate, and Syriac. This is the preferable reading, as the common lection introduces a too sudden change of person.

PSALM LXXXIV.

Ver. 6. *Valley of Baca.*—בְּעֵמֶק הַבָּכָה. We find no mention elsewhere of this valley, though Dathe refers for an instance to 2 Sam. v. 23, 24, which, however, cannot, I think, be regarded as a case in point. All the ancient versions render the word, not as a proper name, but as the valley of weeping or mourning. Whatever may be the precise sense, it is evident that this was a valley, through which persons going up to Jerusalem were wont to pass. It was some barren, dreary defile among the mountains: "a valley of the shadow of death;" but the zeal and piety of the travellers converted it, in their imagination, to a vale abundant in waters, and rendered fertile by the rains that fell upon it. "Molestum haud dubie iter erat per eam vallem Hierosolymam peregrinantibus. Sed præ desiderio sacrorum peragendorum arida ista loca eis tanquam fontibus rigata videntur."—*Dathe.*

Ibid. Blessings.—בִּרְכוֹת. "De singulari quodam Dei beneficio." *Winer, Heb. Lex.* This seems to mean that the rain was not imaginary, but real; and I am not quite sure but the Psalmist meant to say that, on some occasions at least, the divine Guardian favoured the devout travellers with such instances of his bounty.

Ver. 7. *They make fresh accessions.*—The noun חֵיל, which occurs in the sentence, וְלִכְי מִחֵיל אֶל חֵיל, frequently denotes robur, vis maxime hominis: but it is sometimes used for exercitus: hence it has been thought to mean, advancing from one band or company of travellers to another, who were on the road at the same time. The sense which I have adopted appears to me to be the most simple and appropriate; descriptive of the augmented strength and renewed energy by which they were actuated, as they drew nearer to the beloved object of their toilsome pilgrimage.

Ver. 9. *The face of thy anointed.*]—Rosenm. quotes from Jarchi, a celebrated Jewish writer, the following explication: “Intuere faciem Davidis, et respice ad benignitates ejus, et ad illius laborem, quem insumpsit in templi exstructione.” *Vide* 2 Chron. v. 42.

Ver. 10. *On the threshold.*]—הַסְּתִיפִי. As the threshold may be put, *per synecdochen*, for the house, the most simple view of the words is, “I prefer an abode in the house of God, to a residence in the habitations of wicked men.”

Ver. 11. *Favour and honour.*]—The words referred to are, “Sed quia vereor ne arguta sit illa distinctio, præstabit, meo judicio, ita resolvere sententiam. Postquam favore suo complexus fuerit Deus fideles, extollet eos in summam dignitatem, nec desinet eos suis donis locupletare.” He then proceeds to support his opinion by a reference to the following words.—*Calv. in loc.*

PSALM LXXXVIII.

Ver. 5. *Enfeebled.*]—The word פֶּשֶׁיִם is rendered in the English Translation by “free” among the dead. The term is applicable to a manumitted slave: but it is difficult to explain this, so as to be in harmony with the general representation. I am glad, therefore, to avail myself of the sense which is ascribed to it by several modern critics of great skill: Iken, Michaelis, Rosenmüller, and Dathe.

Ver. 18. *The darkness of death.*]—מִיָּדַי מְשָׁחָה. I take this literally to mean, “My acquaintance, or he that knoweth me, is darkness personified:”—*orcus, abaddon.*

PSALM LXXXIX.

Ver. 47. *My time.*]—The pron. אֲנִי is the nom. absol. “Remember: as for me, what my life is.”

PSALM XC.

Ver. 11. *So as to fear thee aright.*]—וּכְיִרְאָתְךָ עֲבָדְתְּךָ. Literally, “and according to thy fear, thy wrath.” But the fear here meant is not that which men actually exercise, but that which the majesty and holiness of God require.

PSALM CI.

Ver. 5. *I cannot endure.*]—The expression in this place is elliptical, לֹא אֵיכָל, “subaudi שָׂאת ferre.”—*Rosenm. in loc.*

PSALM CII.

Ver. 8. *They madly insult me.*]—מְהוֹלֵלִי. “Suffixum resolvi potest subaudita præpositione, ut Psal. xviii. 40. קָמִי insurgentes contra me.”—*Rosenm.* The term מְהוֹלֵלִי is used *in sensu prægnan.*

PSALM CIV.

Ver. 4. *He maketh the winds his messengers, &c.*]—The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who was, I believe, the Apostle Paul,* cites this verse in Heb. i. 7, to prove the dignity of Christ. We naturally inquire on this, whether the Psalm is to be understood throughout of the same person. Some remarks on the application of the name Jehovah to Christ have been submitted to the reader, in a note on Psalm cii., to which I beg to refer. In relation to the Psalm which is now the subject of consideration, I wish to say, that, in my judgment, we should not have been warranted to interpret it of Christ, had not the inspired apostle directed us so to do: this, in my apprehension, is decisive and final. The person whose works are celebrated in this Psalm is Jehovah; a name which is inclusive of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and which is distinctly applied to each, in many passages of the sacred writings; but which is never, in any case, or for any purpose, applied to created beings.

* It has been stated above, that, in the writer's opinion, the Epistle to the Hebrews was written by the Apostle Paul. This, as is well known, is a subject of much controversy. The reader who may wish to peruse a very elaborate discussion of this topic, will find it in the work of Professor Moses Stuart, on the Epistle. I speak of this as being an elaborate production, which it is in a very unusual degree: the learned writer has very satisfactorily decided the Epistle to be St. Paul's; though I may be permitted to say, that the proof would not, I think, have been less cogent, if it had been less extended. It surely was not requisite to detail the discordant fancies, so much at large, of all the German theologians, who have thought proper to exercise their critical acumen, in support of theories which, many of them, are to be traced to no better principle than that of the “cacoethes scribendi.” Professor Stuart did not advert to the useful adage, *μεγα βιβλιον μεγα κακον*, or, in my apprehension, his work would have been greatly improved.

This term, wherever it occurs, is significant of the Deity: though we must, from other considerations, determine whether the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit is intended. There is, therefore, no difficulty whatever in determining that this Psalm throughout speaks of the Divine Saviour, under the name of Jehovah; who is spoken of not only here, but in many places, as the Creator of the world, the former of all things visible and invisible; and as the "Word" by which all things were made, and without which not any thing was made which was made.

It is to be remarked that the apostle, in Heb. i. 7, uses the version which is found in the English translation, but which is, in this version, altered. In obviating any difficulty that may be supposed to be thus occasioned, I beg to observe, that the business of a translator is to give the sense of the original writing. This I have done, and, I think, with good reason. The apostle quotes the passage from the version of the LXX. with which the English translation coincides, and from which it was taken. It was not the object which he had in view to correct the mistakes of the version from which he quotes, and which was in use among the Jews, to whom he wrote; this would have been attended with considerable inconvenience, and he therefore contents himself with what was to be found in the Greek version, which was sufficiently adapted to his purpose.

PSALM CV.

Ver. 18. *They bound him with iron.*—Heb. **בִּרְזֶל בָּאָהַר נַפְשׁוֹ**. This is literally, "His soul entered the iron," which is equivalent to, "He came into the iron," i. e. he was surrounded with iron fetters, or chains. We do not find this circumstance mentioned in the history of Joseph: either, therefore, the memory of it was preserved by tradition; or, which is more satisfactory, it is a conclusion drawn from his being confined in the prison.

Ver. 28. *Yet they rebelled.*—The English translation, "They rebelled not," is in agreement with the present Hebrew text. But it is difficult to reconcile this reading with the history: I have, therefore, adopted that of the Syriac, and LXX., *καὶ παρεπικράναν τοὺς λόγους αὐτοῦ*, in which the negative is omitted.

PSALM CVI.

Ver. 15. *A consuming plague among them.*—English translation, "Leanness into their souls." It is possible to put a sense upon this

version, and one very frequently is put upon it, which is quite remote from its proper meaning. The noun רֵיזָן means a destructive disease, and is here used for the fire of the Lord, by which he showed his displeasure at the murmurings of the people, Num. xi. 1. This noun is derived from רָזָה *tenuem et macrum fecit, consunsit, perdidit.* בְּנִפְשָׁם is a mere Hebraism, used pleonastically for the pronoun.

PSALM CIX.

I beg here to add to the introductory observations on this Psalm, the following considerations. I can discover no reason why this Psalm should be supposed to relate to David, and to his enemies; unless a hypothesis, which has little support either from reason or Scripture, is to be accepted as such. Nothing can be more significant of the treachery and detestable impiety of Judas, than the accumulated particulars that are contained in this Psalm; and, in my apprehension, the force of the prediction is materially impaired by any reference to David, besides that of his being the chosen organ for delivering to the world this remarkable and graphical prophecy. There seems to be, in the minds of many interpreters, a species of morbid sensibility on this subject, which derives its origin from an apprehension that the royal Psalmist could not have delivered such predictions, but in a typical, or secondary sense. If, however, we pay due deference to the authority of Christ's apostles, we shall see little reason for any such scruples. The same apostle, who applies this Psalm to Judas, explicitly asserts that David was a prophet, and that he was conscious of being so, though, like others of the prophets, he might not have a full and comprehensive acquaintance with the predictions which he uttered. Vide Acts ii. 20; 1 Peter i. 10, 12. Should my readers adhere, notwithstanding what is here said, to that which is, I believe, the most common opinion on this subject, which is, that the greater number of the Psalms which relate to the Messiah, do so only in a secondary sense, I beg to remind them of the rule which may be applied to this, as well as to other topics, "Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind." The difference is not fundamental, though of some moment; and I will only observe further respecting it, that I am quite prepared to concede to many of those by whom a view is taken of this subject different from my own, the respect which is due to antiquity, prescription, and superior learning: though I must be permitted to remark, that one substantive reason overbalances, in my judgment, many arguments *ad verecundiam*.

PSALM CX.

Ver. 3. *More abundant, &c.*—What the translators of the English Bible intended by the version which they have given of this passage, is very far from being clear, as many of its readers must have often felt. The Heb. is מִרְחֹם מְשַׁחֵר לְךָ טֵל יְלֻדְתָּךְ, the whole difficulty of which is removed by supplying the word טֵל, dew, in connexion with מִרְחֹם; we shall thus have the sense, “the dew of thy youth is more than the dew of the womb of the morning.” A similar construction is found in Psalm iv. 6. The elucidation is, I believe, to be ascribed to the critical sagacity of Bishop Lowth.

Ver. 4. *After the order of Melchisedek.*—This place, if we may judge by the opinions that have been entertained respecting Melchisedek, is very obscure. Some expositors have supposed him to be the patriarch Shem; others have taken him to be the Messiah himself, &c. These difficulties must have originated, not in any thing that is said of him in Genesis, or in this Psalm, but in the use which St. Paul has made of him in Heb. vii. 3, where he is said to be “without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life,” &c. The meaning of the Psalm is evident, from what is observed of this person in Genesis, where he is said to have united in himself the offices of a king and a priest; so that by the Messiah being of the order of Melchisedek, is meant, that, like this ancient monarch, he would combine in his person the regal and the priestly dignities. As for the statement in Heb. vii. 3, it is impossible that it can be taken literally; and the only reasonable account that can be given of it is, that as it was the object of the apostle to exalt the dignity of Christ above that of the priests who descended from Levi, by comparing him with Melchisedek, who was superior to Levi, and to Abraham, the progenitor of Levi; he employs a rhetorical exaggeration, for the purpose of shewing him to have been a person of most high and singular dignity. He was a king and a priest; he appears but once in the sacred history; there is no genealogical account of him, or mention of his ancestors, or his posterity, nor any recital of his birth or death; so that he stands alone, as a singular monument of antiquity; or, as the learned Grotius says, “he is introduced to us, as if he were a person who had dropped down from heaven.” This erudite commentator has brought together various passages from ancient writers, which have a considerable resemblance to the words of the apostle. One he quotes from the Ion of Euripides, in which the express terms, ἀπάτωρ, ἀμήτωρ, used by the apostle, are found.

PSALM CXIX.

Ver. 28. *My soul is bowed down.*]—The Vulgar translation of this clause, “my soul melteth,” or, as other interpreters think, “my soul is dissolved into tears,” appears to be inadmissible, chiefly on account of the next clause. Dathe, following Driessenius, Knapp, and Seiler, explains it, as is here done, by “is bowed down;” a sense which the word מִלָּךְ has in the Arabic use of it, and which certainly agrees with the connexion much better than that of weeping or dissolving.

Ver. 176. *I have gone astray, &c.*]—I shall transcribe, for the reader’s consideration, Dathe’s note on this verse: “Verbum מִלָּךְ non de morali aberratione a via virtutis et religionis intelligendum est, quam ver. 110. David eodem verbo adhibito a se removet, sed de oberratione sua in exilio propter persecutiones Sauli; quo tempore similis fuit ovi a grege et caula avulsæ et oberranti.”

PSALM CXXVI.

Ver. 6. *Seed for sowing.*]—מִשֵּׁךְ הָזָרַע. This is literally, as explained by Gesenius, “Tractio seminis, i. e. sparsio ejus per sulcos;” it might be rendered, with somewhat more freedom, “he who goeth forth weeping, and sowing seed,” &c. The sense is plain, that labour must precede enjoyment.

This verse furnishes a clear instance, in which the construction הָלוֹךְ וְלֹךְ, usually employed in an emphatic sense, has no emphasis. Vide Schroeder, Heb. Syntax. Reg. 91. Both here, and in בָּאֵיבָנָה, which immediately occurs, it is employed for the sake of euphony.

PSALM CXXXII.

Ver. 6. *Lo! we heard of it, &c.*]—This verse is attended with so much obscurity, that nothing more than a probable explanation of it can be offered. The learned and sagacious Dathe declares he does not understand it. We must, however, do the best we can with it.

The first inquiry belongs to the thing that is spoken of,—that which was “heard of and found.” This I suppose to be the ark. A first view, indeed, of the passage would lead us to suppose, that what is meant, is the spot which David had discovered, as a suitable place on which to erect the house of God. But this cannot be intended, because the site

of the temple was neither at Ephratah, nor in the fields of the wood, or of Jaar. My opinion is, that the first five verses relate to David's vow, and that with ver. 6 a new subject begins. How long David continued to look out for a place for the edifice which he intended to erect, we cannot say; but it was probably a short time only, as he was instructed to desist from his design, which was to be carried into effect by his son. This part of the subject, therefore, seems to be done with, at the end of ver. 5.

Then comes ver. 6, which appears to me to relate to the ark. The manner of its introduction is this: the Psalmist having referred to David's vow, proceeds to the immediate purpose which he had in view, which was to celebrate the placing of the ark in the splendid building which Solomon had prepared for it. That this was his purpose appears from ver. 8: "Arise, O Jehovah! to thy resting place, thou, and the ark of thy strength:" i. e. to take possession of the new abode which was constructed for this purpose. In agreement with this, he adverts to the various removals of the ark within a small number of years; it had been at Shiloh, in the field of battle, in the land of the Philistines, at Bethshemesh, at Kirjath-jearim, in the house of Abinadab, then of Obedom, and last in the tabernacle which David prepared for it in Zion. It was now to take up its rest in the temple of Solomon. This was a joyful occasion; and the main design of the Psalm is to celebrate it. But, before the author proceeds to what was the direct business of the day, he briefly glances at two remarkable incidents of a very painful kind, relative to the ark, and which had, without doubt, left an indelible impression on the feelings of those who remembered them. His object in so doing was to contrast the present joyous condition of the people with those afflictive events to which he adverts for a moment; these were the cases of the ark being heard of at Ephratah, and then found in the fields of Jaar.

1. "We heard of it at Ephratah." This is commonly understood of Bethlehem, as that place had this name. But the ark never was at Bethlehem, at least we read of no such thing. There was a district called by this name, or one closely resembling it, where Elkanah, Samuel's father, lived, and whence Jeroboam came; both of whom are called Ephrathites. 1 Sam. i. 1; 1 Kings xi. 26. This was in the tribe of Ephraim, and is probably the place meant by the Psalmist. Now the ark had been for a long series of years at Shiloh, which is in Ephraim, when it was taken to be present at the battle with the Philistines, in which Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli, were slain, and when thirty thousand of the Israelites lost their lives, together with the capture of the ark. The frightful report of this calamity was brought to Eli, and occasioned his instant death. This appears to be

the event referred to in the words "We heard of it at Ephratah;" and a grievous report it was, not likely to be soon forgotten.

2. "We found it in the fields at Jaar." After the ark had been for some time in the land of the Philistines, they sent it away, and it came to Bethshemesh, in the tribe of Judah, 1 Sam. vii. 2. In the immediate vicinity of this place was also Kirjath-jearim, i. e. the city of Jaar, to which the ark was removed; for the Bethshemites were afraid to retain it, as many thousands of them had lost their lives, for the violation of the sanctity of the ark, by looking into it. As this slaughter took place close by, if not in the fields of Jaar, the Psalmist, with reference to it, says, "We found it in the fields of Jaar. Having glanced at these two afflictive and memorable events, he goes on with his direct design, of encouraging the people to perform due honour to the ark, and to the temple, by contrasting with the sad occurrences to which he had adverted, their present joy and prosperity. If any of my readers should be gratified with this probable elucidation, their gratitude for it is due to a German writer, Tilingius, from whose disquisitions it is chiefly extracted. Vide Rosenm. *in loc.*

PSALM CXXXV.

Ver. 7. *From all parts.*]—The Heb. מְקוֹצֵה הָאֲרֶזֶץ literally means, "from the end of the earth," but appears also to have the sense which is here assigned to it. "Loca in quibus haud dubie מְקוֹצֵה sic (i. e. *ubique*) explicandum est, Jer. x. 13; li. 16. 1 Kings xii. 31; xiii. 33." *Dathe.*

Ver. 17. *Noses.*]—Heb. אִף, but it is doubtful whether it is to be taken as a particle of intensive affirmation, or as a noun. I take it in the latter sense, which completes the enumeration, used distributively for the plural. Taken as a particle, it has here little significance.

PSALM CXXXVIII.

Ver. 5. *Sing of the ways.*]—Heb. וַיִּשְׁירֵי בְּדַרְכָּי. After verbs of rejoicing, hearing, knowing, and speaking, the particle ב means of, or concerning. Gcsen. Heb. Lex.

PSALM CXXXIX.

Ver. 14. *I am admirably made.*]—English translation, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." נוֹרְאָוֹת נִפְלְיָוֹתִי. The first word is a

plural noun, used, as is frequent, instead of an adverb; "mirabilibus modis," in an admirable manner, a manner which excites wonder and reverence. יִפְּלִי־תִי is from פָּלַח , separavit, distinxit; and is expressive of the selection of materials from the mother's substance, by which the fetus is nourished.

Ver. 15. *My bones.*]—So nearly all the Anc. Vers.

Ver. 16. *In thy book.*]—This verse is somewhat obscure. The first clause is sufficiently clear. The latter admits of, and occasions, considerable diversity of critical opinion. The English translation has, "In thy book all my members were written, which, in continuance, were fashioned, when *as yet* there was none of them." The unusual number of supplied words shews that the passage was thought by the translators very defective and obscure. There appears to me to be no reason for the insertion of "my members," to which there is nothing that leads. I shall copy the Heb., that my readers, who are conversant with the language, may judge for themselves, without further trouble. $\text{וְעַל סִפְרְךָ כָּל־מְחַבֵּי יָמִים יִצְרָו וְלֹא אֶחָד בָּהֶם יָמִים יִצְרָו}$. The word יָמִים , "days," is the subject, and the sense is cleared by supplying this word before כָּל־מְחַבֵּי .—The verb יִצְרָו is from יָצַר , fingere animo, formare, excogitare: we thus get—"And in thy book (i. e. the book of God's foreknowledge and his purposes) the days, all of them were written, the days were delineated, though not one among them *was*, i. e. existed as yet."

Ver. 20. *They seduce thy cities.*]—The word נִשְׁוּא is the infinitive, used as a gerund, in the meaning which the word has in Gen. iii. 13, "The serpent tempted me, beguiled me."

PSALM CXLI.

Ver. 5. *Let a righteous man reprove me, &c.*]—This verse and the next appear to have been but little understood: indeed there are many obscurities attendant upon them. The version of the English Bible is, in my apprehension, quite unintelligible, as it must have often been found by all who have endeavoured to extract a satisfactory sense from it. The version which is here given was first suggested by Doederlin, in his Scholia upon the poetical books of the Old Testament; and it affords a very satisfactory explication, without having recourse to any alterations of the text, or putting any forced application upon the words in which the passage is conceived. The words $\text{יְיָ רֵאשִׁי כִּי עוֹד אֵל}$ have created great difficulty. The verb יְיָ is here derived from נִוּא recusavit, renuit:* and כִּי עוֹד

* The נ which is dropped in the common Heb. text, from the verb יָנַס is found in 36 Codd. Kennic.

are rendered by "*si vel repeteret*," which they will very well bear, their literal meaning being, "though yet." The last clause, the meaning of which the English translation altogether distorts, appears to me to mean, without doubt, what Doederlin understands by it: it relates to the enemies of David, who recompensed his kindness by ingratitude; he therefore says, in effect, "I can well endure the kind reprehensions of good men, though frequently repeated, as they are beneficial, rather than injurious; but the unjust reproaches, and calumnious speeches of my enemies, greatly distress me, so that my prayer to God is, in relation to them, that he will defend me against them." If this view of ver. 5 be deemed satisfactory, the sixth verse will have little difficulty.

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APPENDIX.

No. I.

On the Imprecations that are found in the Psalms against the enemies of David; referred to in Note on Psalm v. 10.

MANY persons have thought it to be very difficult to exculpate David from the charge of an inhuman and vindictive temper, on account of the imprecations against his enemies that are to be found in several of the Psalms; and some very far-fetched and insufficient modes of justification have been urged in explanation. The apprehension itself appears to me to be founded on a very narrow and incomplete view of the case, as nothing can, I imagine, be more obvious, than a defence of the passage in Psalm v., and of all similar ones, against such an imputation. As a defence of this kind will, however, require more remark than is usually admissible in an explanatory note, it seems expedient to transfer it to this place.

It would, in my judgment, be as unsatisfactory as it is destitute of support, to allege, in defence of these passages, a notion that they are not, indeed, in perfect unison with christian sentiment; but that allowance may be made for the less enlightened and less beneficent genius of the Old Testament dispensation, to which we may attribute language and feelings that christian men can scarcely contemplate without repugnance. It is, I admit, ever painful to witness the miseries which men bring on themselves by the indulgence of irregular passions and affections in the present life; and the hopeless condition to which impenitent transgressors are doomed, by infinite rectitude and wisdom,

in a future life, is so much more fearful, that the sensibility of many persons of piety instinctively revolts from a deep meditation of it : yet no Christian will allow himself, influenced by the emotions of benevolent sympathy, to question the solemn and reiterated denunciations of the Holy Scriptures on this subject, or to presume to explain away such unwelcome testimonies, by a spurious and infidel criticism, as if they were unbefitting the supreme beneficence and love of the infinitely perfect Governor of the Universe. We must never forget that human sympathies form no rule for divine retribution ; and if we find it difficult to combine one with the other, our business is “ to be still, and to know that he is God.” “ Let God be true, though every man be found a liar.”

I shall now proceed to state what appears to me to be a full and complete justification of the passages of Scripture in question, and especially of that which has given occasion to the present discussion. Let it be remarked, then, that no precepts of religion, nor any sentiments of reasonable humanity, prohibit the infliction of just punishment for crimes that are committed against public welfare. Christianity itself, that celestial visitant, which breathes the purest beneficence and love, authorizes and enjoins punishment for conduct which, if it were permitted without animadversion, would speedily subvert all the foundations of society. “ The powers that be are ordained of God.” The magistrate “ beareth not the sword in vain, for he is the minister of God, a revenger, to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.” Rom. xiii. 1—4. In all nations treason and rebellion have been deemed worthy of the severest animadversion ; and that with the most manifest propriety, since they assail not the persons or property of private individuals, but are directed against the community, and tend directly to produce the direst calamity,—viz. civil war,—that can be inflicted on the commonwealth. David was the lawful sovereign of the Israelitish nation ; he was, in the strictest sense, “ the Lord’s anointed.” He was elevated to this dignity, not on his own account, but for the sake of that singularly privileged people over which he was placed. Every attempt, therefore, to subvert the established order, to bring into contempt or danger the chief magistrate, as David was,—much more to foment rebellion and to wage war against him,—was a crime of the deepest dye, and that merited the most signal punishment. It was David’s duty,—a duty imposed on him by the express authority of his great Paramount, the God and King of Israel,—to maintain to the utmost the authority with

which he had been invested for the benefit of his country ; and he would have failed to discharge the most sacred obligations, both to God and man, had he, in any measure, yielded to the traitorous combination that was formed against him, at the instigation of his own son, and was sanctioned by the concurrence and aid of many of the highest persons in the kingdom, who had been the personal friends of the monarch, and whose crime, therefore, combined the blackest ingratitude with the most atrocious treason and parricide. There is, then, nothing inconsistent with the dictates of humanity and benevolence, in David's entreating the help of God, to enable him to extinguish, by the due chastisement of his rebellious subjects, the flames that would otherwise have mingled in one conflagration, his own dignity, happiness, and life, and the welfare of an entire nation that was committed to his care.

The remarks which have now been offered, relate immediately to the expressions which David employed, on occasion of the usurpation and rebellion of Absalom. There are several Psalms in which language nearly similar is found, respecting Saul and his adherents. In this case, the principles which have been suggested must be modified, according to the different relations by which the two cases are distinguished.

Saul was the legitimate sovereign of Israel, and David ever regarded him as such, and behaved with the respect which was due from a subject to his lawful prince. Notwithstanding the unjust and cruel persecution which he suffered, he refused to embrace a most favourable opportunity which was offered to him of delivering himself, by the death of Saul, from the dangers to which he was constantly exposed. But his language on that occasion was, "The Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the Lord's anointed." 1 Sam. xxiv. 5. Assailed as he was by the emissaries of Saul, and knowing, as he did, that they hunted for his life with the most determined purpose of destroying it, there is surely nothing inconsistent with justice or benevolence in his petitions to God for deliverance from these men, or that he should desire they might even be cut off, if this were the only means by which his safety could be secured. We have no instance in which he adopted any offensive measures against these inveterate adversaries ; all he attempted, in addition to his prayers, was to defend himself from their aggressions, by the best means which were within his reach.

A justification of David's prayers is to be derived also from the fact of his having been anointed to be the future king of Israel, by the

express appointment of God ; the attempts, therefore, which were made upon his life were in direct opposition to the will of the Supreme Legislator and Sovereign. David merited no such treatment from Saul as that with which he met ; he had taken no steps to secure for himself the honours which he had the justest reason to expect. In various instances he exposed himself to the perils of battle and war, in discharge of his duty and allegiance to Saul ; so that the ingratitude which he experienced from that misguided and malevolent prince, was aggravated by the benefits which he had derived from David's courage, prowess, and fidelity, and was in express contravention of the divine authority, by which tenure alone he himself held the kingdom over which he had been appointed. When all these circumstances are combined and duly considered, nothing worthy of reprehension will be found in the conduct or prayers of David, but every thing which can entitle him to the praise that is due to a pious, upright, and benevolent man, who did not even attempt to become the avenger of the wrongs which were inflicted upon him, but committed himself and his cause into the hands of " Him who judgeth righteously."

There is another case to which some of David's prayers and imprecations relate, on which it is proper to offer a few remarks :—this is, that of the public and foreign enemies of his kingdom and people. That he employed the power with which he was entrusted, for the safety and prosperity of his country, was merely the discharge of a sacred duty which he owed to God, who had advanced him to the throne for this purpose, and to the people, who heartily concurred in that advancement, and cheerfully obeyed his commands, as their king and leader against foreign aggression ; and that to these efforts he added his frequent and earnest supplications for success and victory, so far from being a reason for censure or disapprobation, is, on the contrary, a most demonstrative proof of his piety to God, and his good will to men. I am not aware of any just exceptions that can be taken against David on these accounts, by any persons who entertain correct views of the purposes for which laws and magistrates were established among men. We have, indeed, in this country and in others, some persons of great piety and worth, who contend that, at least under the christian dispensation, war of every kind, even the most strictly defensive, is forbidden. I admire the benevolence of these good men, and most entirely concur with them in their wish to banish the demon of war from among the nations of the earth,—a consummation for which I am ever prepared to pray in unison

with them ! But there are some very momentous considerations which these excellent persons appear to me to overlook. It is evidently the course which Providence by all its arrangements sanctions, that, in the pursuit of private and public welfare, we must employ all the methods which that Providence has placed in our hands to attain it. This is a rule which has no exceptions; and compliance with it is what constitutes the difference between wise and prudent men, and men who are under the influence of superstitious, ignorant, or fanatical notions. We have no right to expect any good but by ascertaining its agreement with the will of God respecting it—by a devout dependence upon his aid, in concurrence with our own active measures, and by the exertion of all our faculties, and the employment of every instrument that is within our reach, for its attainment. No case can be imagined to which this remark is inapplicable; much less then is it inapplicable to the pursuit and attainment of the public peace and safety of nations, and the large communities of mankind.

If any doubt may remain after considerations of this kind have been duly weighed, it must, I think, give way to the express instructions which the New Testament delivers in relation to this topic. The language of the Apostle Paul, to which allusion has already been made, and which is quoted from Rom. xiii. 4, leaves, in my apprehension, no room for hesitation upon the subject. It cannot be questioned that the words of the inspired Apostle relate to the preservation of the public welfare through the ministration of magistrates, who are raised to dignity and authority, that they may frame just and equitable laws for the government of the people over whom they preside; and may, without partiality or weakness, execute them with equal and indiscriminate justice. If men, therefore, refuse to obey the laws—if they make aggressions upon the character, property, or safety of their fellow-citizens, the strong arm of the law must be extended to enforce its penal sanctions, and to show the community at large, that its enactments may not, and will not, be violated with impunity. If then it be the duty of magistrates thus to become conservators of the peace and good order of the nations whose governors they are, *à fortiori*,—it is their business to defend their people against the fraud and force of foreign nations, if they should be exerted to the injury of the communities which they govern. No reason can be given for the employment of the sword in repressing private and social injustice, which does not bear, with increased force, upon public and national aggressions. Princes

and magistrates are forbidden to trespass against the rights of foreign nations, for the aggrandizement of themselves or of their subjects; every infraction of the general law of nations is prohibited, whether it springs from ambition to extend the limits of empire, or from cupidity to augment the riches and wealth of their own people, by plundering the dominions or destroying the inhabitants of other states. Wars commenced and carried on for such purposes are in direct opposition to the dictates of public and eternal justice, and are the grossest violations of that royal law of liberty, which commands us to "do to others what we wish them to do to us." But when foreign states become the authors of war for ambitious or predatory objects, it is the first duty of those to whom the guardianship of countries that are menaced or attacked is entrusted, to employ all the powers with which they are invested to repel such aggressions,—and if reason and remonstrance fail, to employ force to the utmost against force. In all such cases, offensive measures, which may be requisite for defence, become perfectly justifiable, and, instead of being infractions of benevolence, are the sole methods by which the peace and security of nations can be maintained. The governors of countries which are thus assaulted, would show themselves to be altogether unworthy of the high offices to which they have been raised, if under any prettexts whatever they sacrificed the interests of their own people, to the unjust designs or ambitious projects of their unprincipled assailants. And as every individual citizen is bound to lend his aid, if it be necessary, to sustain the arm of justice in bringing malefactors to punishment, so he is equally bound to exert his whole power for the preservation of his country from all hostile attacks and unprovoked aggressions.

" Let laurels, drenched in pure Parnassian dews,
 Reward his memory, dear to every Muse,
 Who, with a courage of unshaken root,
 In honour's field advancing his firm foot,
 Plants it upon the line that justice draws,
 And will prevail or perish in her cause.
 'Tis to the virtues of such men, man owes
 His portion in the good that Heaven bestows."

COWPER. *Table Talk.*

To bring these general reflections to bear on the subject which has given occasion for their introduction, it was the duty and business of David to act on such principles, and to employ all the power and authority of his state and office, to maintain peace and order among his

subjects, and to defend them against all the lawless violence and unprovoked assaults of their foreign adversaries. His combining the exercise of devout supplications to God for his powerful aid, with his own prompt and courageous exertions, proves him to have been worthy to rule over men; and delivers to governors and magistrates, of all nations and ages, an example most worthy of their imitation, in order that they may "not bear the sword in vain," but may be "for a terror to evil doers, and for a praise to them that do well."

No. II.

On the apparent Indications found in the Psalms, and other parts of the Sacred Writings, of Want of Knowledge in the Writers of the Old Testament, of a State of Existence in a future World.

THE first observation which I have to make on this subject is, that the whole tenor of both the Old and New Testaments is opposed to the notion, that the pious persons, who lived before the coming of Christ, were unacquainted with the hope of a future life. If it were not so, it is passing strange that many of the wiser Pagans should have excelled, in a matter of so much importance, the persons who were favoured with a supernatural revelation, and were permitted to hold a personal intercourse with God. This notion, the very mention of which demonstrates its preposterous character, is, notwithstanding, perfectly correct, if the pious worshippers of God, under the Old Testament, were ignorant of a life that is to succeed the present temporal state of being. They might, on this hypothesis, have concurred in the sentiment which was maintained by multitudes of their contemporaries, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," Isaiah xxii. 13. They might, and most likely would have said, If we have no prospect or hope beyond the grave, then let us amuse ourselves in the best manner we are able, and abandon all thoughtful contemplation on the past and the future, as inimical alike to the enjoyment of the passing hour. The Epicurean precept would thus have been appropriate to their sentiments :—

"—— Sapias, vina liques, et spatio brevi
 Spem longam reseces. Dum loquimur, fugerit invida
 Ætas : carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero."

It is, however, indisputable, that such sentiments were repudiated by many of the wisest and most intelligent heathen writers. Numerous testimonies might with ease be cited from the works of the most distinguished Greek and Roman authors, to shew that they clung with tenacity to the pleasing expectation of a future life, in which truth and virtue are to reap a reward suited to their nature. Quotations of this kind are so largely made in treatises composed expressly on the subject, that a reproduction of them on the present occasion would be a needless repetition of what must be familiar to all who read theological books : the only instance therefore which I shall produce is a passage from Cicero, in which that illustrious writer, speaking of the arguments which had been employed by the most excellent Grecian philosophers in order to prove the immortality of the soul, uses the following language : “ Licet concurrant plebei omnes philosophi, (sic enim ii qui a Platone et Socrate et ab illa familia dissident, appellandi videntur :) non modo nihil unquam tam eleganter explicabunt, sed ne hoc quidem ipsum quam subtiliter conclusum sit intelligent.”—*Tusc. Quæst.* lib. i.

I must now remind my readers, that the observation which has led to the remarks which have just been made is, that the whole tenor of both the Old and New Testaments is opposed to the notion, that the pious worshippers of God, who lived before the coming of Christ, were strangers to the hope of a future life. In support of this allegation, I shall select the following testimonies. In Psalm xvi. 10, we have these words ; “ Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (Hades), neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.” It may, perhaps, be said, that this Psalm relates to the Messiah, whose death and resurrection it foretells,—and I fully admit it ; but David was the writer of this Psalm, and it would be strange indeed if he, who foretells the sufferings and glory of Christ, were ignorant altogether of the transcendent purposes for which those events took place. This is quite inadmissible ; and we have in this passage a decisive proof in support of the allegation that has been advanced. Psalm xlix. 15 : “ God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave (Hades), for he will receive me.” I shall state my own opinion of these words in the language of Dathe ; “ Luculentum est in hoc versu et sequenti indicium cognitionis de diversa sorte hominum piorum et impiorum in altera vita ;” *i. e.* “ This passage contains an ample proof of the different conditions of the just and unjust in another life.”—*Dathe, in loc.* Psalm lxxiii. 24 : “ Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory.”

See also Prov. xiv. 32; Eccles. viii. 11—13; xi. 9; xii. 14; all which passages are express, and free from just exception. In the New Testament it is unhesitatingly affirmed, that the ancient servants of God acknowledged themselves to be pilgrims upon the earth, and that they looked for a better country. See Heb. xi. and Luke xx. 37. In addition to these testimonies, it may also be observed, that the entire structure of the Old Testament involves the belief of a future state; as it is quite inconceivable that such obedience to the requirements of religion, such patience in affliction, such exercises of faith, hope, and joy in God, as are there displayed, could have taken place, if all expectation of recompense had been confined within the narrow limits of this brief and transient state.

In the next place, we have to determine the reasons which, notwithstanding the acquaintance with a future life that has been shown to have been enjoyed, led to such representations as that in the verse to which this article refers; “In death there is no remembrance of thee.” Many other passages occur in which similar views are stated, and some of them are expressed in very strong terms. Besides those which are found in the Psalms, there are others in different books of the Old Testament. In Isa. xxxviii. 18, Hezekiah is represented as saying, “The grave cannot praise thee: death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.” The most remarkable, perhaps, of this class of texts is found in Job xiv. 19, *ad fin.* “Thou destroyest the hope of man: thou prevailest for ever against him, and he passeth: thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away: his sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them: but his flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn.” Job here expresses not only the utter ignorance in which the dead are respecting all mortal concerns, but employs an unusually bold figure to exaggerate the misery of death: he represents the lifeless corpse as if it were still endued with thought and consciousness, for the sole purpose of feeling more keenly the utter destitution and wretchedness of its condition.

I beg now to remark, that the principle on which all these representations are made is evidently drawn from the sensible appearances which are occasioned by death: separation from all the concerns of the living,—inactivity, silence, decay, and dissolution,—are the invariable concomitants of death; and on them the imagination rested, heightening and augmenting them all, so as to form the most affecting and lugu-

bricious images. The same colouring of fancy is to be found in the notions that prevailed respecting the place of the dead, and imagination drew pictures of the sublimest kind to give effect to them. See Isa. xiv. 9—19; on which passage Bishop Lowth has a series of remarks of great interest and beauty, from which I quote the following words: "The former part of this prophecy is one of the most beautiful instances that can be given of elegance of composition, variety of imagery, and sublimity of sentiment and diction, in the prophetic style; and the latter part consists of an ode of supreme and singular excellence."—*Lowth, on Isaiah.*

In order to bring these remarks to an end, it must, I am of opinion, be allowed, that as a very considerable part of the ancient world was involved in great darkness and uncertainty on the subject of a future state, so also, that those pious persons who were endued with clearer information, were yet subject to changes of feeling, more or less, in relation to it. The discoveries were made only in special instances, and, compared with the light which the gospel has communicated, were partial and incomplete; so that even good men were subject to frequent apprehensions, and appear often to have shewn great reluctance to leave the present world and the active engagements of life. Nor can this justly be regarded as matter of surprise, when we consider the fluctuations of feeling to which wise and upright men are now liable, notwithstanding the discoveries which the christian religion has made. "We walk by faith, and not by sight," is an apostolic observation; and, in a world like the present, abounding in sensible objects, that are apt to interpose, and sometimes to obscure the strongest vision, it is not wonderful that we witness many cases in which faith partially fails, under the influence of the principles of sense and fancy, which never cease to exert their power in this most imperfect and ensnaring life.

No. III.

On the Application of the Psalms to the Messiah.

THE opinions of interpreters and critics respecting this subject differ so much, that it is scarcely possible to adopt any principle which relates to it on which a uniformity of judgment exists. It is far from being my intention to engage in a general inquiry respecting the theories

which have been adopted for the purpose of removing the difficulties with which the subject is supposed to be attended. This would require more space, and involve much more discussion, than the limits which are necessarily prescribed to such a work as the present, admit. The readers, who may be desirous of extending their researches on the subject, will find ample means for so doing in the Rev. Hartwell Horne's elaborate "Introduction to the Study of the Scriptures," and the multitudinous authors to which that indefatigable writer refers. My intention is, to confine the observations which I have to offer, almost entirely, to the principles of interpretation that are assumed in the Notes which accompany this translation. But, before I proceed to the statement which I have immediately in view, it may be advisable to make a few remarks respecting some of the principal hypotheses which have been framed respecting the application of the Psalms to the Messiah. This I shall do with great brevity.

I. Many celebrated interpreters, both ancient and modern, have espoused the notion, that all, or nearly all, these sacred compositions are significant of the person, advent, and work of the divine Saviour. In consequence of this assumption, we find in their writings a vast assemblage of remarks on the typical, secondary, spiritual, and mystical senses, in which they suppose the Psalms should be understood. To such an extent have these modes of interpretation been employed, that a celebrated expositor of the seventeenth century lays it down as a fundamental rule, that "the words and phrases of the Scriptures are to be understood in every sense of which they are susceptible." No proof is needed to shew, that such a mode of explaining the Scriptures, while it is at variance with the common sense and judgment of mankind, is fraught with the most injurious effect on multitudes, who revolt from such extravagance, and rashly conclude, that a book which is to be interpreted by such a rule must be altogether unworthy of regard; and thus the sacred volume is made responsible for the weakness, credulity, and inconsiderateness of its professed friends. All the writers, indeed, who adopt the notion of the Psalms being universally, or almost all, applicable to the Messiah, are by no means involved in this extreme absurdity; though the adoption of such a principle cannot fail to lead to interpretations which distort the plain unsophisticated meaning of the divine odes, and very unduly contract the moral and spiritual influence and advantage which they are really adapted to promote.

The works on the Psalms which have obtained probably the greatest

popularity in this country, are those of Bishops Horne and Horsley, which are both, to a considerable extent, conducted on this principle. Of the elegance and piety which are conspicuous in the Commentary of Dr. Horne, no one can be ignorant, who is at all familiar with it. Dr. Horsley was a writer of considerable erudition, great acumen, and daring; all his theological productions bear the impression of an energetic mind and powerful hand, though many of them fail to leave a permanent sentiment, in the minds of their readers, of their truth and accuracy, at all proportioned to the effect which a first perusal of them may frequently produce. The only observation which I shall make on the mode of interpretation and translation which is generally employed by these prelates and their disciples, is, that a book containing so many distinct compositions, and which comprehends so many and such various topics as the Book of Psalms manifestly does, cannot be made to bend to the support of such a principle without the application of great force, and an abandonment of the most important rules on which all sound and satisfactory interpretation is founded.

II. A principle of interpretation directly opposed to that which has just been noticed is espoused by numbers of critics and expositors, who will scarcely admit that any of the Psalms can be strictly applied to the Messiah. These are, indeed, chiefly continental theologians, though persons holding similar opinions are not wanting in this country. Interpreters of this class generally construct their comments with an avowed disregard to the authority of the evangelists and apostles, which is irreconcilably at variance with the form in which they delineate the religion of the holy Scriptures. If these first teachers of the christian faith are to be justly regarded as inaccurate reasoners, who have, without authority, taken upon themselves to expound the Old Testament, we shall do well to emancipate ourselves from the respect which Christians have, from the beginning, agreed to award to them; but if they asserted a claim to a supernatural and heavenly inspiration, which was promised to them by their divine Master, and if they established that claim by the production of infallible credentials, it will be abundantly more rational to follow their interpretations than to yield our credence to men, who, in whatever degree they may be learned and astute, fall under the just imputation of professing themselves to be the disciples of a religion, to the subversion of which all their literature and talents are really, though not intentionally, made subservient.

III. Another theory on which many of the Psalms are interpreted is strenuously maintained by critics of a very different character from those who have now been noticed. The class of writers to which I advert comprehends the large majority of divines, eminent for learning, critical skill, and profound research; to whose labours we owe the numerous invaluable theological works by which the ages from the Reformation to the present times have been enriched and ornamented. The principle on which many of these eminent persons have concurred, is that of considering many of the Psalms to be originally descriptive of David, Solomon, and other distinguished persons of the Old Testament, but to be so composed as, in a still higher and more exact sense, to be applicable to the divine Saviour; who, they think, was designed to be adumbrated, typified, and mystically represented, in the offices, characters, and events, by which these persons were distinguished. This principle necessarily involves a double sense; a primary and a secondary fulfilment. It has been objected, not without some appearance of reason, against this mode of interpretation, that it has a tendency to exhibit the holy Scriptures in a manner which wears some semblance to the obscure, equivocal, and juggling impostures of heathen oracles and predictions. It cannot, however, be denied, that this rule of interpretation, as applied by many of its eminent defenders, lays a strong hold on our regard, by the elucidation of many difficulties which it offers, and especially by the sublime views which it gives of divine foreknowledge, and of the profound arrangement of events, which it states to be so adapted and skilfully adjusted, that the type and the antitype perfectly and designedly correspond to each other.

It is by no means my intention to enter into a general disquisition respecting the merits of this principle, or its application to the general interpretation of the Old Testament predictions: my business is with the Psalms only; and I have made the preceding observations merely for the purpose of stating, with greater clearness and effect, the principles by which the explanations of the Psalms have been governed in the work which is now placed in the hands of its readers; and I shall, without further remark, request attention to the following observations, which will serve to show, and, I hope, to sustain, the principles by which I have been guided.

a. The infallible direction under which Christ and his apostles acted, in applying different portions of the Psalms to himself, is universally assumed and acted upon in the explanations which have been offered in

the preceding pages. If this fundamental rule be controverted, I can discern no fixed principle on which we can proceed in the interpretation of the New Testament itself, or of the Old Testament, by means of assistance derived from it. This, indeed, is not the place in which to argue the matter; and all I shall say relative to it is, that if this principle be abandoned, we may bid adieu to every hope of ascertaining, with certainty, the application of prophecy, or, indeed, of deducing from the Scriptures any thing which is to command our assent, beyond the moral rules which they contain; the obligations of which we must make out, as well as we can, by abstract reasoning on the nature and relations of intelligent beings. I leave it to the judgment of my readers to determine, whether this be not a fair conclusion, and one which amounts to an entire renunciation of the truth and importance of the christian revelation.

β. It is assumed as a principle of interpretation in this work, that those parts of the Psalms which may appear to us to relate to Christ, but to which the sacred writers of the New Testament have not appealed, are not to be placed on a level with the authorized and sure interpretations which are supported by their unerring decisions. On a subject so transcendently surpassing the ordinary objects of human intelligence as that of the interpretation of prophecy, we are bound to exercise the greatest caution and modesty, lest we should substitute the erring fancies of men for the dictates of heavenly truth. No very extensive acquaintance with the strange and preposterous uses which have been, and continue to be made, of the predictions of Scripture, is necessary to evince the propriety of this rule: where such a principle is disregarded, and men of small discernment, but of warm imagination, undertake to expound the veiled and mysterious symbols and language of prophecy, the most injurious consequences frequently result, both to themselves and their deluded followers; and the holy Scriptures are perverted to purposes of the grossest folly and enthusiasm. I am far from wishing to abridge, in any degree, the legitimate use of any parts of the sacred writings, or to lessen the instruction and solace which may be derived from their private perusal, and careful application to the purposes of improvement; but I am bound to protest against a confident, extravagant, and licentious application of the images, types, allegories, and other recondite modes of communication, which, in compliance with the taste and genius of Eastern writing, the divine Author of the Scriptures has thought proper to employ. An adherence to the rule for

which I now plead, while it sanctions the reasonable application of the sacred books to the invaluable purposes of edification, will alone preserve us from attributing to the glosses and conjectures of men, the certainty which belongs only to the authorized instructions of those divine teachers, who were preserved from every degree of error and mistake by the Spirit of Truth which dwelt within them.

γ. Another principle on which the explanations contained in this work are founded is, that some of the citations from the Old Testament, which are made by the writers of the New Testament, are mere allusions; the intention of which is, not to indicate the accomplishment of designed predictions, but to illustrate, in language which was familiar to the persons for whose use they wrote, the sentiments or statements which they were engaged in establishing. It is a custom which has been adopted by writers of all ages and countries, thus to cite for illustration, effect, or ornament, passages from preceding authors that were well known, without either the writer or the readers of such quotations suspecting that they were originally written for the purpose of predicting the events or circumstances to which they are rendered applicable.

If a principle of this kind be not admitted in the explanation of the Scriptures, we shall be brought into great difficulties; as an attempt to prove that the design of the original writer, in such passages, was to presignify the events to which they are applied by later writers, must lead us to a relinquishment of the clearest and best ascertained rules of interpretation. It may be said, I am fully aware, that the holy Scriptures form a unique instance, and do not resemble other writings, inasmuch as they were all composed by divine inspiration; and that though the prophets and earlier writers might not be acquainted with the full import of their own compositions, they were all fully known to the divine Spirit, who was the real Author of every part of the sacred volume. To the truth of this objection I do not demur; but it appears to me to be altogether inapplicable to the subject on which it is supposed to bear. The omniscient Spirit is perfectly acquainted with all the writings and with all the thoughts and purposes of men, in all places and times: but this affords no proof that a passage of Homer, which may be quoted by Cicero, to illustrate some topic of which he might be treating, was intended to apply to that topic. The objection, to acquire validity, must demonstrate not only the infinite knowledge of the Holy Spirit of God, but must show that the particular passage was designed by him to presignify the event to which it is made

applicable. Wherever this can be done, we are bound to receive it as a direct prophecy, though it may be a case for which we might antecedently have thought the Spirit of Prophecy would not have condescended to provide.

δ. A fourth assumed principle is taken as the rule of explanation, that the Psalms, which are evidently quoted by the writers of the New Testament as prophetic intimations, and presignifications of the Messiah and of his kingdom, are to be understood, *not in a secondary sense, but in the precise meaning which was attached to their original enunciation.* Notice has already been taken of the opinions which are very generally supported by the majority of learned and accomplished interpreters on this subject, which it is needless to repeat. I am not insensible of the propriety, in some instances, of yielding to an argument *ad verecundiam* : but this cannot be regarded as one of them. This double sense appears to me to be liable to some weighty objections, and to be altogether unnecessary in explaining the uses which are made of the Psalms by the sacred writers of the New Testament. At all events, the *onus probandi* lies upon the supporters of this theory ; and I shall not protract my observations by a detail of their reasonings, or an attempt to reply to them : it will be sufficient for me to maintain the truth of the principle by which I have been guided. For this purpose I shall place before my readers an instance or two of the application of the principle which I espouse.

I. We will take the sixteenth Psalm for the purpose which is in view. This Psalm is quoted by the two Apostles Peter and Paul, in Acts ii. 25 ; xiii. 35, and they both speak of the prediction as not only really, but exclusively, descriptive of the Messiah. I shall transcribe the passages, to support the notion which I entertain of them. Acts ii. 25 : “ David speaketh concerning him ; I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand that I should not be moved : therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad : moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope. Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life ; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day : therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne : He, seeing this before,

spake of the resurrection of Christ ; that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption." In ver. 34 he adds, " For David is not ascended into the heavens," &c.

In this passage the Apostle asserts first, that David speaketh concerning him, *i. e.* Christ ; and then, secondly, he affirms that David did not speak of himself. Not the most distant intimation is dropped that David spoke first of himself and then of Christ ; but the Apostle ascribes the whole to Christ, and to him alone.

We have a similar account given of this Psalm in Acts xiii. 35, by the Apostle Paul. After applying the Psalm to Christ, he adds, for the purpose of shewing that it did not speak of David, " David, after he had served his own generation, by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption : but He whom God raised up again saw no corruption."

The only method by which this proof of direct application to Christ can be opposed is, by supposing that some parts of the Psalm are not applicable to the Messiah, but to David ; and that, therefore, the whole must be understood in a double sense ; or that some part belongs to David only, and another to the Messiah. The notion, however, of dividing the Psalm, by assigning parts of it to different persons, cannot be sustained ; for nothing can be more clear than that the Psalm exhibits the connected meditation or speech of one person only, in which the speaker commences with expressing his confidence in God, and carries the same train of thought to the close. As for the supposition, that some part of the Psalm cannot be applied to Christ, it appears to me to be altogether without reason, as the Messiah is represented in it as a man and as a Jew, who uses language appropriate to the representation which is prophetically given of him. I shall request my reader to compare with these observations the version and interpretation which I have given, and shall then leave to him the determination of the question, whether, according to the statements of the two apostles, the Psalm is applied by accommodation, or in a sense merely secondary, to the Messiah,—or whether, on the contrary, he is not the sole topic of it, in exclusion to all other persons. I will add only on this subject, that whatever may be the opinions of Jewish or christian expositors respecting it, the apostles speak of the application which they make of the Psalm, as one that was not likely to be controverted by the persons to whom they addressed it ; and that this furnishes us with a decisive ground of belief, that their application was

not novel, but in accordance with the principles of interpretation which were, at that time, in use among the Jews.

II. The forty-fifth Psalm may next be cited in support of the principle of interpretation which is adopted in this work: respecting this Psalm there is a very general concurrence among the patrons of a double sense, in representing it as an instance of such application. Mr. Hartwell Horne, in his *Introduction*, Vol. II. p. 541, mentions the second, the sixteenth, the twenty-second, and the forty-fifth Psalms, as the most decisive instances of the existence of a double sense; and in so doing he is but the representative of a host of critics and expositors, who support his view of the case. The almost universal opinion of the expositors who patronize this theory is, that the forty-fifth Psalm was written to celebrate the nuptials of Solomon with Pharaoh's daughter, and is then to be considered as a mystic representation of the union of Christ with the church. On this opinion I request a consideration of the observations which follow:

1. It is to be noticed that the application of this Psalm to Solomon and his bride is altogether unsupported by scriptural authority. It is most likely a notion, for which we are indebted to Jewish ingenuity, and has been perpetuated by Christian interpreters, too easily induced to follow such interested guides. Whether this be so or not, there exists no document of any authority to shew that this is more than an opinion, deemed probable by its authors and patrons, but which we are under no obligation to adopt, in opposition to the cogent exceptions to which it is liable. The following are some of these exceptions.

2. The character of the king whom the Psalm delineates is in no respect similar to that of Solomon. Solomon was a singularly pacific king; his reign was undisturbed by any wars, foreign or domestic, that are at all remarkable; but the prince who is celebrated in this Psalm is a warrior, who was to acquire eternal renown by the victories which he was to gain over his adversaries.

3. The prince who comes before us in this Psalm is illustrious for his moral excellency; his love of righteousness, and his hatred of iniquity, were so great as to entitle him to the most signal rewards from the righteous and holy God. It is needless to particularize the discrepancies between the character of this prince and that of Solomon in this respect.

4. The king who is here celebrated is expressly asserted to be divine. "Thy throne, O God! is for ever and ever," his kingdom is everlasting:

and his dominion is altogether righteous, "the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre." How this can be verified in Solomon we must be at a loss to discover!

5. The last objection which I shall suggest is, that the Apostle Paul applies this Psalm to Christ, and alleges it as an argument for his immeasurable superiority over all other divine messengers; even for his true Deity, the immutable rectitude of his character, and the everlasting duration of his kingdom. If, on considering these objections to the application of the Psalm to Solomon, it should still be maintained that its primary application is to him, support must be derived for the opinion from other sources than the Scriptures, which manifestly know nothing of such a representation. Most of the remarks which have been submitted, in considering the sixteenth Psalm, are equally applicable to this; and the result of both is, that the Messiah is presignified in no secondary or subordinate sense, but that He, and his matchless glories, form the sole theme of these illustrious and remarkable prophecies. I will just observe here, that the most ancient Jewish doctors, as they are represented by the Chaldee interpreter, support the application of the forty-fifth Psalm to the Messiah, without reference to any other person whatever.

I shall put an end to this discussion by observing, that all the Psalms which are cited by the writers of the New Testament, as being applicable to Christ, must be expounded on the principle which has now been developed: that the intervention of any persons whatever, between the predictions delivered on this subject in them and the divine Saviour, who is the sole and proper object of them, is not only unauthorized by the just rules of interpretation, but is as superfluous as it is unfounded, and liable to very serious objections. I shall conclude by observing, that the entire remarks which have been suggested in this brief review I mean to be restricted to the Psalms; as it is not my object to discuss at large the whole subject of the mode in which the predictions of the Old Testament, relative to the Messiah, are to be interpreted.

THE END.

ERRATA.

Ps. XX. 7, *for* 'our God.' *read* 'Jehovah, our God.'

XLV. 14, *for* 'her;' *read* 'her,'

LVI. 13, *for* 'land' *read* 'light'

LVIII. 2, *after* 'oppression' *add* 'in the land.'

LXXIV. 7, *for* 'violate it,' *read* 'violate the dwelling-place of thy name,'

In a few instances, the word **SELAH** has been accidentally omitted.

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